Songs from Boethius'
De consolatione philosophiae

The 'Cambridge Songs' Leaf



Sam Barrett
with Benjamin Bagby
and Hanna Marti

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INTRODUCTION

Imprisoned in the early 520s, Boethius could not have anticipated that his final work would become one of the most influential books of the Middle Ages. He had previously pursued a distinguished career as a Roman statesman and philosopher, serving as consul and latterly as *magister officiorum*, the most senior administrative official in Ostrogothic Italy. He had also excelled as a scholar, embarking on a project to translate Greek learning into Latin, his works proving critical in the transmission of classical thought to the Middle Ages. Loyalty to the Roman Senate nevertheless made him vulnerable to his enemies at a time when the West was ruled by an Ostrogothic king. Accused of treason, Boethius was arrested, tortured and condemned to execution. *The Consolation of Philosophy* portrays Boethius' struggle to reconcile himself to his fate by exploring the ways of man, the role of Fortune, and the major questions of good and evil. Visited in his cell by a personified figure of Philosophy, who is alarmed by the state into which he has fallen, Boethius is gradually restored from self-pity to his rightful mind not only through reasoned dialogue but also through lyric. The thirty-nine poems interspersed with prose throughout the *De consolatione philosophiae* provide occasions for reflection. They are also the medicine that cures him.

Evidence that the poems of the *Consolation* were sung in the early Middle Ages survives in the form of musical notation added to over thirty extant manuscripts dating from the ninth through to the late eleventh century. The signs used for the notation, known as neumes, record the outline of the melodies, prompting the aural memory of the singer to recall precise pitches. Without access to the lost oral tradition, the task of reconstructing the melodies for the *Consolation* had until recently seemed impossible.[1]

This performing edition comprises six songs from the first book of Boethius' *De consolatione philosophiae*. All six are reconstructions based on notations added to a single leaf from the so-called Cambridge Songs manuscript (Cambridge, University Library Gg. 5. 35), which was almost certainly copied at St Augustine's, Canterbury in the mid eleventh century. The Cambridge Songs collection, which appears at the end of the codex, transmits a repertory of over eighty songs thought to have been

[1] For an introduction to the wider tradition of adding musical notation to the poems of the *De consolatione philosophiae* in the Early Middle Ages and the challenges that the form of neumatic notation used poses for modern reconstruction, see Sam Barrett, 'Creative Practice and the Limits of Knowledge in Reconstructing Songs from Boethius' "On the Consolation of Philosophy"', *Journal of Musicology* 36.3 (2019), pp. 261-94.

compiled in the Rhineland, possibly at the court of the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry III (1017-1056).[2] The single leaf subsequently became separated and was rediscovered in the early 1980s by Margaret Gibson.[3] Now reunited with the original manuscript in Cambridge University Library, the leaf contains the poems only from the *Consolation* copied in series: the first two poems were written out in full, after which only the opening lines of the poems were copied. Neumes were added to six of the seven poems from the first book. No notation was provided for the sixth poem, *Cum polo Phoebus*, whereas the seventh poem, *Nubibus atris,* was notated twice; reconstruction has not been attempted for the second notation for *Nubibus atris* which was added in the margin and survives in a fragmentary state.

The notation added to the Cambridge Songs leaf is exceptional in the extent to which special forms, modified forms and sign disposition were employed to indicate scale degrees and pitch relationships. Recognition of hints about melodic profile enabled identification of a number of different strategies used for singing particular verse forms. These strategies may be compared with the techniques of singing Latin verse observable in fully reconstructable contemporary song repertories, as well as guidance about ways of composing new melodies given in broadly contemporary theory treatises such as Guido of Arezzo's *Mircologus* (c. 1030) and John's *De musica* (c. 1100).[4] By piecing together different forms of evidence, it proves possible to propose highly informed reconstructions, each of which is here supplied with its own commentary explaining the background to reconstruction.

Recovery of pitches is only one part of the task of reconstruction. Many questions remain that are common to medieval song traditions, especially concerning rhythmic realisation and instrumental participation. Other questions to be faced include the implication of certain notational signs for delivery in performance, pronunciation and expression in text delivery, the working out of partial initial notations for texts that are not composed in regular strophes, and the extent to which the melodies were treated flexibly within and between performances. Definitive answers cannot be offered here, but information is provided to enable those interested to begin the process of searching for their own solutions.

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[2] Peter Dronke, Michael Lapidge, and Peter Stotz, 'Die unveröffentlichten Gedichte der Cambridger Liederhandschrift (CUL Gg. 5. 35)', *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 17 (1982), pp. 58–9.

[3] Margaret T. Gibson, Michael Lapidge and Christopher Page, 'Neumed Boethia *metra* from Canterbury: A Newly Recovered Leaf of Cambridge, University Library, Gg. 5. 35 (the "Cambridge Songs" manuscript)', *Anglo-Saxon England 12* (1983), pp. 141-52.

[4] Guido of Arezzo, *Micrologus*, chs. xv-xvii and Johannes *De musica*, chs. xviii-xx. See Warren Babb (trans.), *Hucbald, Guido, and John on Music: Three Medieval Treatises*, ed. Claude V. Palisca, New Haven, Connecticut & London: Yale University Press, 1978, pp. 70-77 and 137-47.

Principles of Transcription

Stemless noteheads have been used in order to allow performers to reach their own decisions about rhythm within a spectrum of possibilities. General advice is provided in the section on performance preparation and guidance specific to individual songs in the individual commentaries.

The following signs are used in transcription:

 *oriscus*, implying some kind of emphasis; the *oriscus* is usually placed at the same pitch as the note immediately preceding; interpretations in modern performance range from agogic or dynamic accents through to a 'breaking' of the voice;

 *quilisma*, implying a light, tremulous delivery, which is often achieved by lengthening the note before the *quilisma* and singing a quicker, lighter pitch on the *quilisma*;

 liquescence, which is most commonly associated with liquid consonants (l, m, n, r), but also with diphthongs; it is common practice to sing through the consonant or diphthong on the additional, usually lower liquescent tone, creating the effect of a glide.

Instrumental Participation

There are no explicit indications of instrumental performance in the surviving neumed manuscripts of *De consolatione philosophiae*, in which only a single melodic line is notated for any given song. There is nevertheless some evidence to suggest that instruments were used for performances of Boethian *metra* in particular and learned Latin song in general. Sextus Amarcius, who was resident in Speyer around the middle of the eleventh century, relates in a fictional tale how after-dinner entertainment was arranged for a patron staying at an inn.[5] Having arranged his fee, the professional musician (*iocator*) sang four poems to the accompaniment of his harp (*chelys*). All four of the songs mentioned by Sextus Amarcius are found in the Cambridge Songs collection, thereby implying that performance to a harp was conceivable for at least some of the songs.

Supporting evidence for singing Boethian *metra* to the harp may be drawn from the example of a learned singer-harpist from the previous century. Dunstan was a skilled harpist and singer in his youth and was dismissed from the court of King Athelstan (r. 924-39) for singing 'the vain songs of ancestral heathenism' and 'frivolous incantations of fables', references in all likelihood to epic

[5] For the relevant passage, see Jan M. Ziolkowski (ed. and trans.), *The Cambridge Songs (Carmina Cantabrigiensia)*, Tempe, Arizona: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998, p. xlv.

narratives in the vernacular.[6] At Glastonbury, where he was later appointed abbot, he kept his harp in his cell. He also corrected manuscripts, among which was a copy of the *De consolatione philosophiae* that already contained at least one notated *metrum*.[7] A renowned Anglo-Saxon harpist and singer thus encountered music for at least one Boethian *metrum* around a century before the Cambridge Song collection was copied. Dunstan may also have sung Boethian *metra* at St Augustine's Canterbury, where he was Archbishop of Canterbury from 960-988 and continued to teach.

It is less clear whether other instruments were used in performances of Boethian *metra.* Pipe players (*tibicines*) are referred to alongside *cithaeredae* and secular singers, both men and women, in an early tenth-century treatise that praises their dedication to the rules of their art.[8] The nightingale song (*Aurea personet lira*) in the Cambridge Song collection, one of the four cited by Sextus Amarcius, refers to the bird's melodious voice as exceeding the *tibia* and *fistula*, as well as the *cithara* and *lira*, suggesting that both were used in accompanying secular song.

Performance Preparation

The question of which textual features to observe in performance has no single or systematic solution. There is no evidence that metre was routinely observed in either the reading or singing aloud of poetry outside of didactic contexts; historical reports suggest instead that poetry was normally read aloud as prose.[9] The implications of this for melodic rendition appear to have been varied. Aspects of verse structure are on occasion marked through a range of melodic means, for full details of which see individual commentaries. The range of styles that may be detected in the melodic settings speaks against a systematic relationship between verse metre and rhythm in performance. Performers should make decisions on a case by case basis, taking note of the range of phonetic, grammatical, syntactical and rhetorical features in the melodies recorded for the *metra*. Solutions adopted may range from more or less equal syllable renditions (with exceptions made for longer melismas), to free oratorical delivery shaped by prose accent, to some kind of emphasis on the ictus (whether agogic or accentual), to more or less measured cadential passages. In all cases decisions should be informed

[6] 'sed avitae gentiliatis vanissima didicisse carmina et histriarum frivoleas coluisse incantationes', *Vita S. Dunstani* 6.2, in Michael Winterbottom and Michael Lapidge (ed. and trans.), *The Early Lives of St Dunstan,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2012, p. 20.

[7] i.e. *O stelliferi conditor orbis* (I:5) in Vatican City, Vat. lat 3363.

[8] 'Cithaeredae et tibicines et reliqui musicorum vasa ferentes vel etiam cantores et cantrices seculares omni student conatu quod canitur sive citharizatur ad delectandos audientes artis ratione temperare', *Commemoratio brevis*, ch. 1 (6). Text from Hans Schmid (ed.), *Musica et scolica enchiriadis una cum aliquibus tractatulis adiunctis*, Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981, p. 157.

[9] See, further, Dag Norberg, *Les vers latins iambiques et trochaïques au Moyen Age et leurs répliques rythmiques,* Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1988, pp. 14–16.

by specific observable features in individual notated songs with solutions potentially varying within as well as between individual songs.

Performers should begin by familiarising themselves with the text. This may at first be done with the aid of translations as listed below, but the goal should be to gain a full appreciation of the workings of the Latin text. After gaining a secure sense of the basic grammatical structure, attention should be paid to the sound of the Latin, in particular pronunciation, prose accentuation and punctuation. The latter provides a guide not only to understanding syntax, but also to relative degrees of hiatus between phrases. Punctuation in the texts of the reconstructed songs here follows Moreschini's edition, but performers may wish to compare this with punctuation added to the leaf, which may now be consulted online.[10] The basic working principles of Latin pronunciation should be remembered:

i) that Latin does not have an accent on the final syllable, and so two-syllable words have a stress on the first syllable;

ii) in a three-syllable word the penultimate syllable is stressed if it is long (which can be checked by consulting a dictionary), otherwise the antepenultimate syllable is stressed.

Germanic pronunciation of Latin is recommended, especially since the Cambridge Song collection is thought to have originated in the Rhineland.[11] It is also recommended that performers gain a basic sense of metrical design so that occasions where fixed metrical patterns accord with the word accent can be noted.[12]

Boethian *metra* were not written within established song genres, but the texts of many draw on characteristics of laments, hymns, love songs, nature songs, astronomical songs, moralistic songs, ballads etc. Awareness of allusions to song styles may help by suggesting an overall style or attitude in performance. At the same time it has to be remembered that the *metra* are not uniform: some display a shift in attitude within the song, and both voice and affect may likewise inform interpretation and delivery. The *metra* in the *Consolation of Philosophy* are sung either by Boethius or by Philosophy, but there remain questions as to whether individual *metra* are sung by Boethius as a narrator or as an actor in the drama. Boethius and Philosophy address sometimes each other,

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[10] The Cambridge Songs manuscript may now be consulted via the Digital Library of Cambridge University Library. The recovered leaf is at: https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-GG-00005-00035/906

[11] For further guidance in pronunciation, see Harold Copeman, *Singing in Latin, or, Pronunciation explor'd*, Oxford: H. Copeman, 1992 (rev. edn.).

[12] For an introduction to Latin metre, consult David. S. Raven, *Latin Metre,* London: Faber & Faber, 1965; for the range of metres used in the *De consolatione philosophiae*, the simplest place to begin is with a *conspectus metrorum* as provided in the preface to Karl Büchner (ed.), *Philosophiae consolationis libri quinque: Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius*, Heidelberg: Winter, 1947.

themselves via internal reflection, or the Creator. As for affect, Boethius passes rapidly through heightened emotional states in Book I and Philosophy is moved by Boethius' fate at the outset, beginning with an initial cry of *Heu!* Thereafter she turns to initially gentle forms of persuasion and latterly denser philosophical argument.

The issue of instrumental participation in performances of songs from the *De consolatione philosophiae* is addressed in four videos on the 'Restoring Lost Songs' website, featuring members of Sequentia.[13] Five different beginning points for recreating instrumental performance may be abstracted from the interviews:

i) *reconstructed vocal melodies* – these provide given material for modal orientation, melodic ornamentation, and patterns of phrasing; multiple techniques of embellishment may be used, including melodic repetition, decoration, creation of parallel melodic lines following rules for *organum* drawn from ninth- to eleventh-century theory treatises (principally the *Musica Enchiriadis* and Guido of Arezzo's *Mircologus*), and isolation of formulae for re-combination in differing configurations;

ii) *other untexted melodic material known to contemporary musicians* – these include a) widely disseminated didactic phrases used to teach properties of modes and establish modal orientation, and b) modal formulae drawn from untexted melodies that were variously sung in ecclesiastical contexts but retained instrumental titles such as *sinfonia*, *cithara*, *fistula* and *tuba*;

iii) *the poetry* – the characteristics of individual poems in terms of genre, sounding pattern, and overall mood provide a stimulus for instrumental work in terms of register, density of figuration and rhythmic character;

iv) *pragmatics of performance* – introductions serve as ways of establishing a mode and atmosphere for a song performance; interjections within songs cover the necessity for the singer to breathe, as well as reinforcing rhetorical devices such as questions, exclamations or dramatic pauses; codas create closure within extended strophic structures that otherwise lack the sense of an ending; other decisions arise from performance context, e.g. the size of the room, the nature of the audience, the ordering of songs within a programme etc.;

v) *affordances of instruments* – reconstructed instruments imply a range of performance practices through their materials and mechanics.

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[13] https://boethius.mus.cam.ac.uk/instruments-overview/sequentia-videos

There is therefore a wealth of contextual or soft evidence for instrumental practice. The problem in reconstruction becomes how to apply a set of broad conventions to particular songs. Key areas of decision-making include when and where to play in any given song, co-ordination of *ex tempore* playing between musicians, and adaptations needed for different performance circumstances.

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The reconstructions presented in this performing edition were prepared over a period of four years of collaboration with members of Sequentia, beginning with Benjamin Bagby from 2014, joined by Hanna Marti from 2015, and Norbert Rodenkirchen from 2016. Each reconstruction involved a process of consultation and individual exploration, resulting in what may be considered 'best' but not necessarily 'final' versions. The names of those involved in each reconstruction are listed in every case, with the order of the names indicating in broad terms the relative contribution to the versions reproduced here. Each reconstruction is dated as an indication of the point at which the process of consultation was considered complete.

The sounding results of the collaboration were captured over the course of a few days in the summer of 2017 and were released the following year as a CD under the title *Boethius: Songs of Consolation—Metra from 11th-century Canterbury*. This recording may be profitably consulted as an aural counterpart to this written edition, especially concerning matters of sounding realization which can only be hinted at in writing. At the same time, it should be remembered that not all the recorded versions recorded were taken from the recovered Cambridge leaf (full details are provided in the accompanying booklet) and the performances are not limited by an attempt to re-present a written edition in sound.

This edition is offered as a resource intended to introduce an unfamiliar body of song and to inspire its users to engage with the challenges thrown up by the task of reconstructing an early medieval song tradition. It is hoped that performers will regard the reconstructions as the starting point for their own engagement with songs whose realization remains open to many different approaches. Those wishing to prepare their own versions of melodies are encouraged to make use of the resources on the project website, 'Restoring Lost Songs: Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy', https://boethius.mus.cam.ac.uk/, which contains manuscript images of almost all surviving notated *metra*, as well as further guidance on reconstruction.

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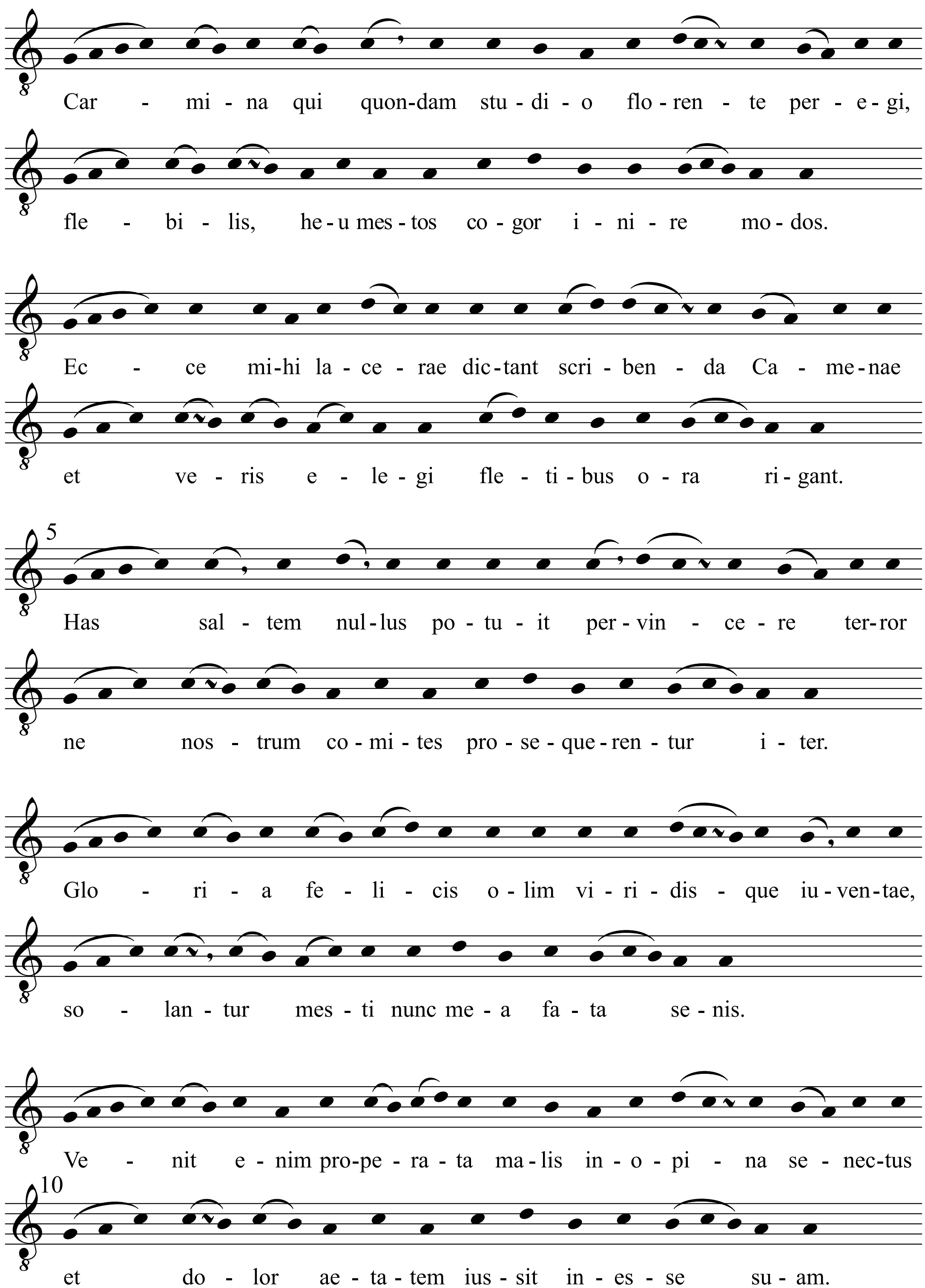
My sincere thanks are extended to Benjamin Bagby, Hanna Marti and Norbert Rodenkirchen for being willing to share their time and expertise in working on several different stages of this project. This project would also not have been possible without the support provided at various stages by the British Academy, the Leverhulme Trust, the Isaac Newton Trust, the Music & Letters Trust, Pembroke College, Cambridge, the Cambridge Arts and Humanities Impact Fund, and the Faculty of Music at the University of Cambridge. The advice and support of Delphine Mordey in all aspects of the project related to Outreach and Impact have also been invaluable.

The illustration on the front cover of this edition depicts Boethius playing the monochord and is taken from a twelfth-century illustrated copy of his *De institutione musica* (Cambridge, University Library Ii.3.12). The image is here reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library. The Latin text follows Moreschini's edition. All translations are my own and may be freely reproduced.

Sam Barrett
Epiphany, 2020

Carmina qui quondam (I:1)

Boethius laments the state into which he has fallen, comparing his sorrowful songs of advanced age to the songs of his contented youth, and blaming Fortune for his downfall



I, who once composed
songs with abundant zeal,

tearful, alas, am forced
to begin sad strains.

Look! Muses rent with grief
dictate what I should write

and elegiacs moisten
my cheeks with real tears.

At least fear could not
conquer them

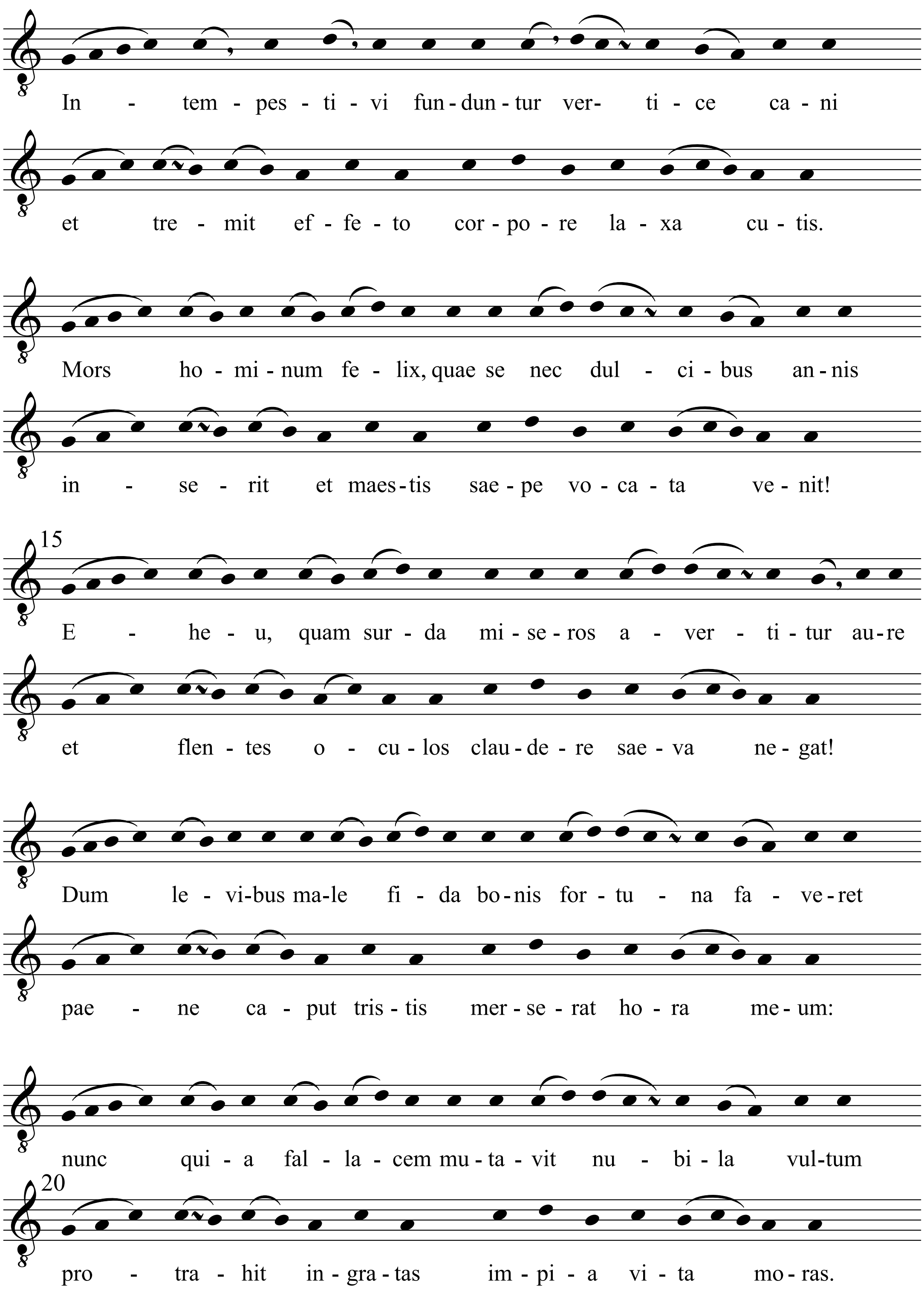
for they would follow
my path as companions.

Once the glory of a
charmed and lively youth,

now they console my fate
in sad old age.

For senility has come without
warning, hastened by ills,

and sorrow has
brought on the years.



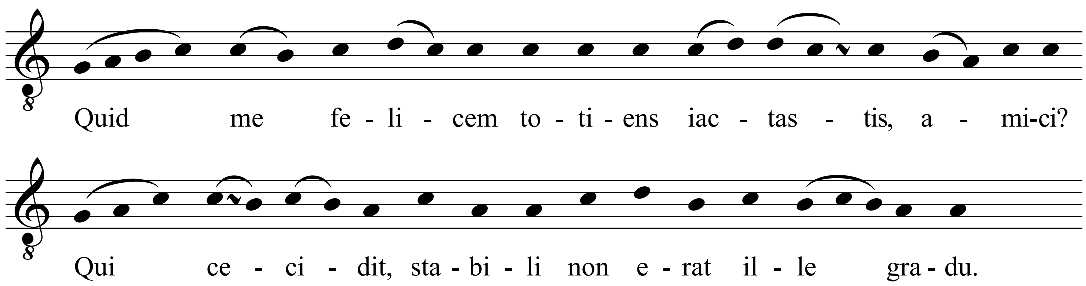
White hairs cover my head
ahead of time
and my skin shakes, loosed
from a worn-out body.

Fortunate is the man
whose death comes not in
pleasant times but in sad ones
when often called for!

Alas, how cruel death turns
a deaf ear to the wretched
and refuses to close
weeping eyes!

While Fortune in bad faith
favoured me with trivial goods,
an hour of sadness would
have nearly drowned me:

Now her clouded face has
taken on a false appearance,
my wretched life
prolongs thankless days.



Why did you dismiss me so often as fortunate, friends?

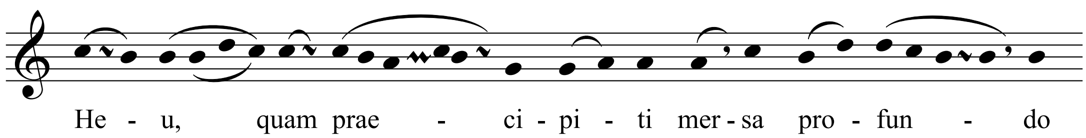
The step of one who falls was never stable.

Cambridge UL Gg.5.35, fol. *442r

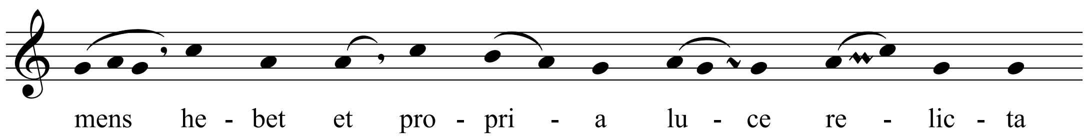
Reconstructed by Sam Barrett
February 2019

Heu, quam praecipiti (I:2)

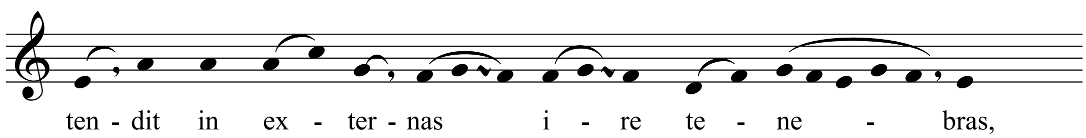
Philosophia laments Boethius' fallen state and sternly exhorts him to begin the process of returning to his right mind



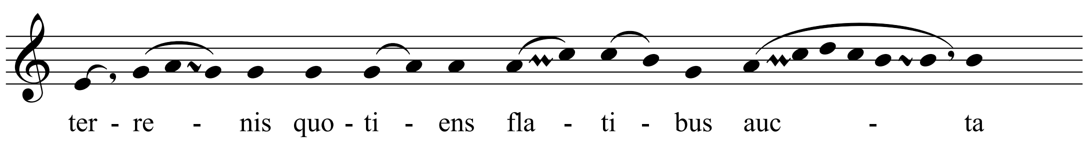
Alas, how the mind submerged
in precipitous depths



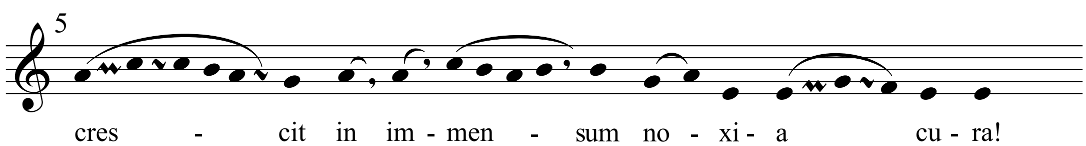
is dulled and turning
its back on the light



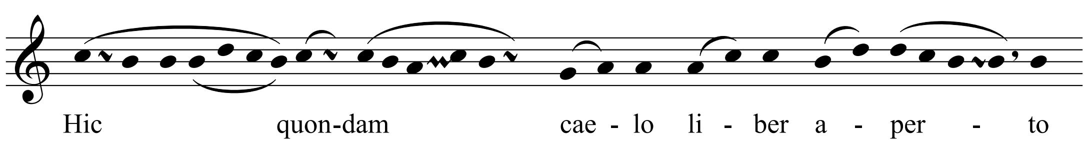
strives to head
into outer darkness,



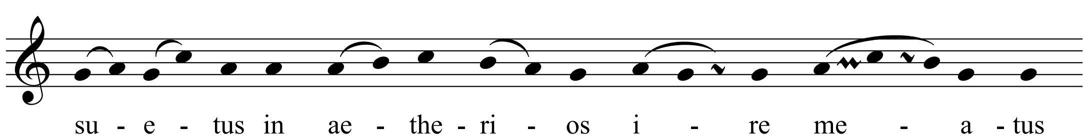
whenever anxiety
grows immeasurably,



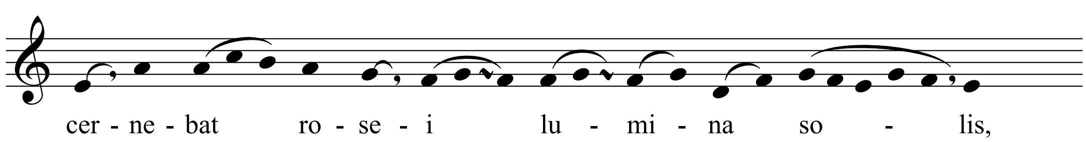
whipped up
by mundane storms!



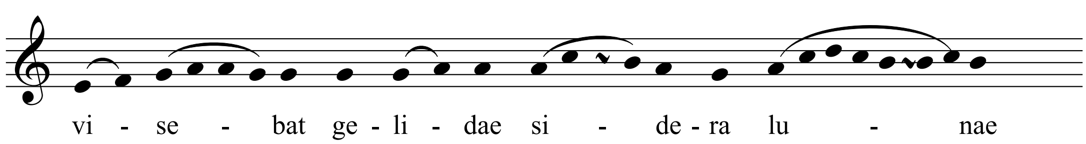
This man, once free
under the open sky,



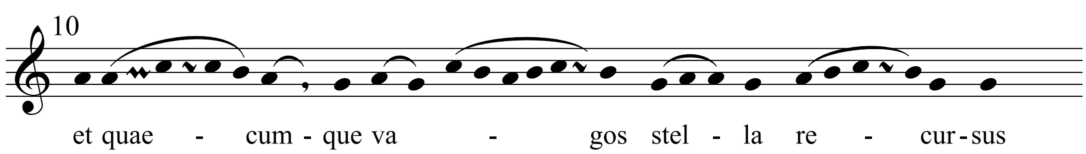
accustomed to charting
courses in the heavens,



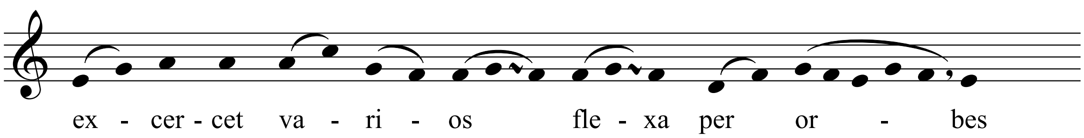
used to perceive the
brightness of the rosy sun;



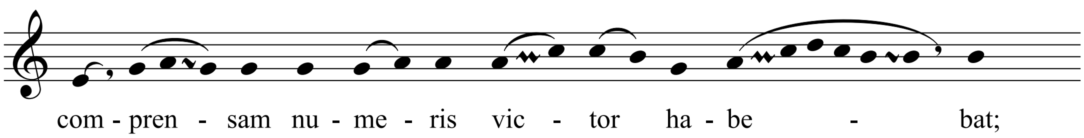
he beheld the constellations
of the icy moon



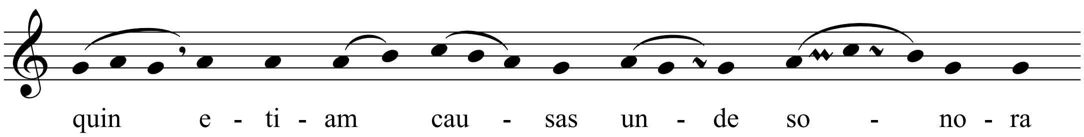
and whatever winding
course a star took,



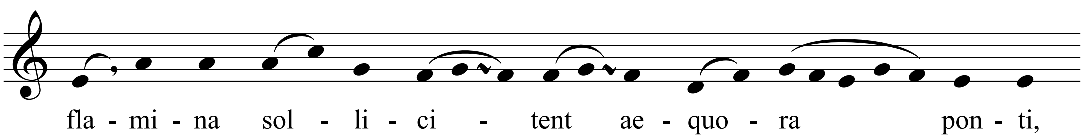
turning back through
its various orbits,



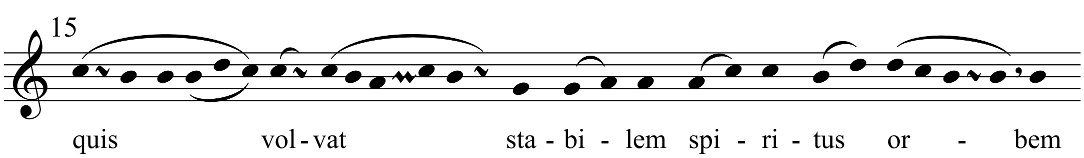
he masterfully
comprehended in numbers;



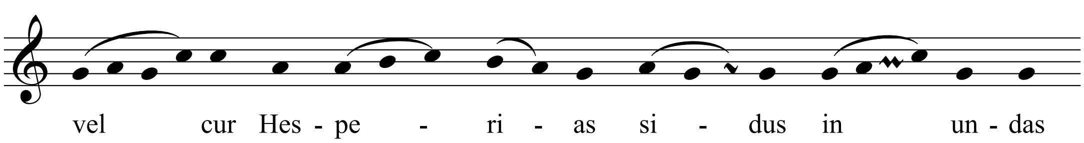
he even investigated
how thunderous



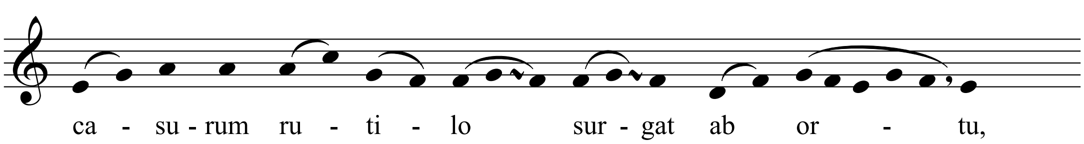
winds stir up the
surface of the ocean,



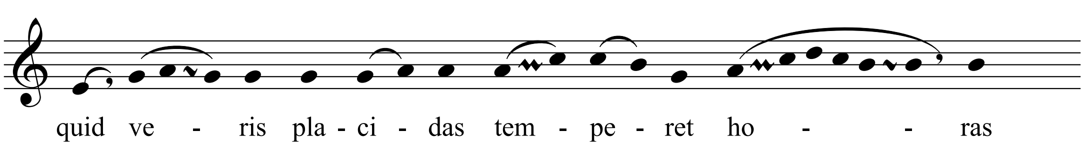
what force turns
the stable orb,



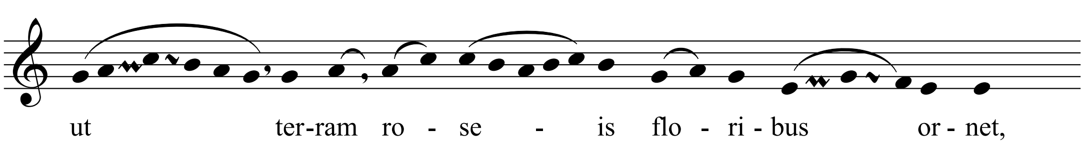
or why the evening star
falls into western waves



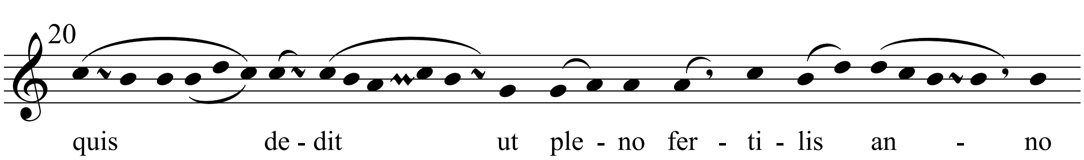
and rises in ruddy dawn;



he used to divine what tempers
the mild hours of spring



to adorn the earth
with blooming flowers,



and who ordains that
fertile autumn is laden



with pregnant grapes
in the fulness of the year,

thus he rendered
the various causes

of hidden nature.

Now he lies, the light of
his mind extinguished,

his neck pressed down
by heavy chains,

and wearing an expression
downcast with care,

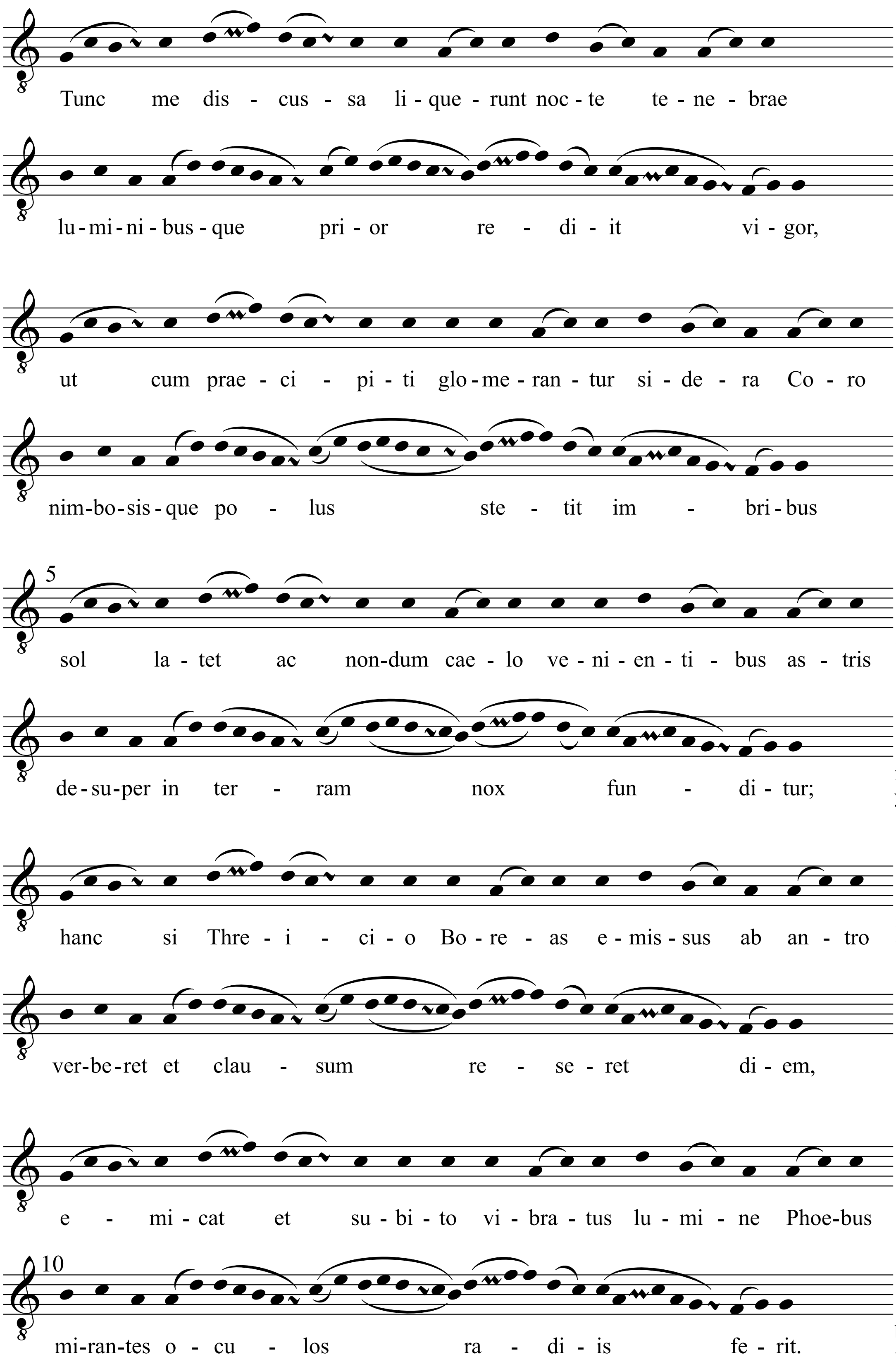
forced, alas, to behold
the bare earth.

Cambridge UL Gg.5.35, fol. *442r

Reconstructed by Sam Barrett,
Hanna Marti and Benjamin Bagby
May 2017

Tunc me discussa (I:3)

Boethius describes a moment of inner transformation at a decisive moment in beginning his recovery



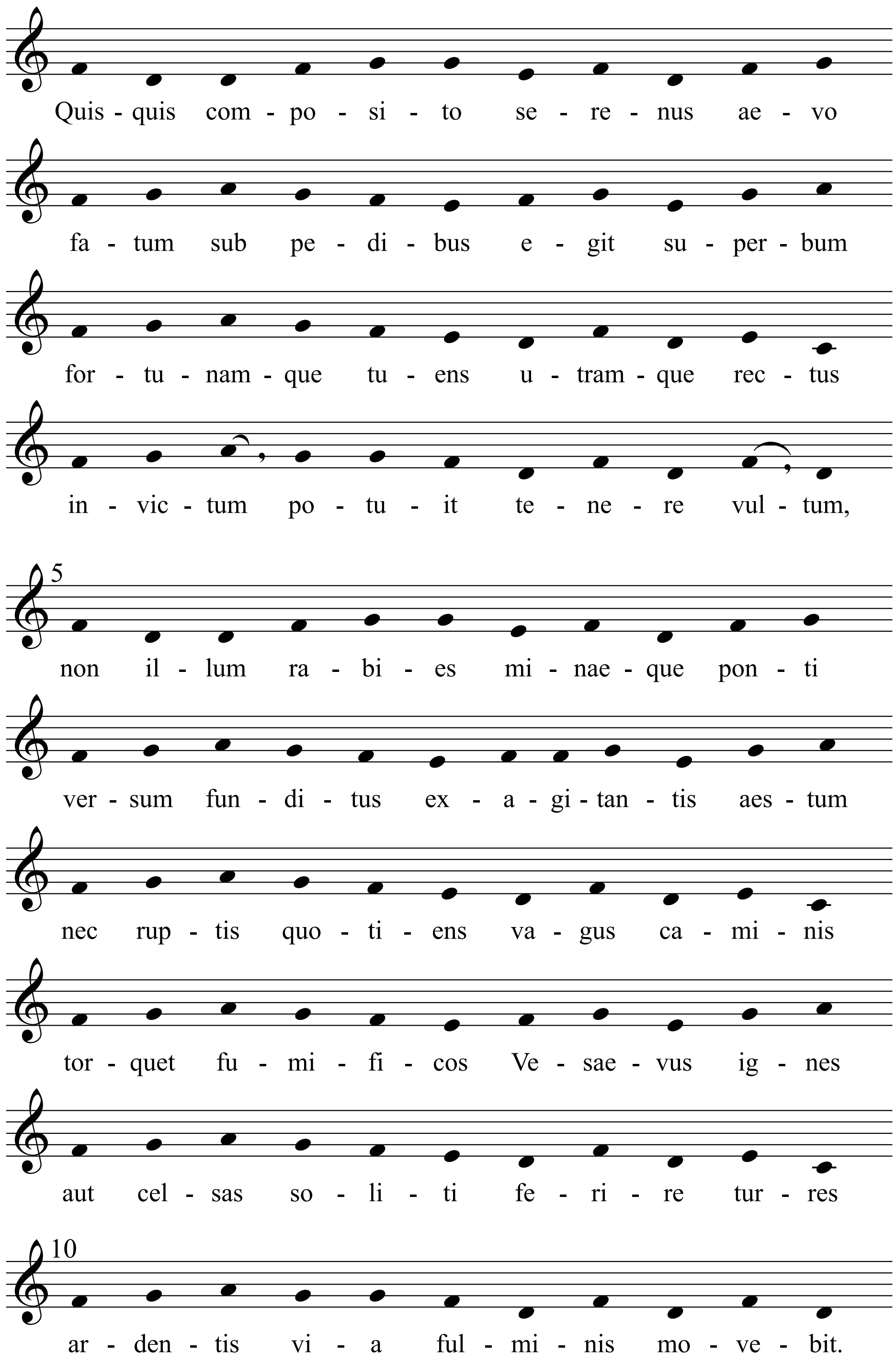
Then the gloom lifted from me as the night dissolved
and my eyes regained their previous strength,
as when the firmament is corralled by a precipitous
northwest wind and the pole engulfed by stormy rain clouds,
the sun is hidden and night spreads out over the earth
from above, the stars not yet apparent in the sky;
if the west wind sent from its Thracian cave
should lash out and unlock the sealed day,
the sun would shine forth and, suddenly glimmering with
brightness, transport marvelling eyes with its rays.

Cambridge UL Gg. 5. 35, fol.* 442r

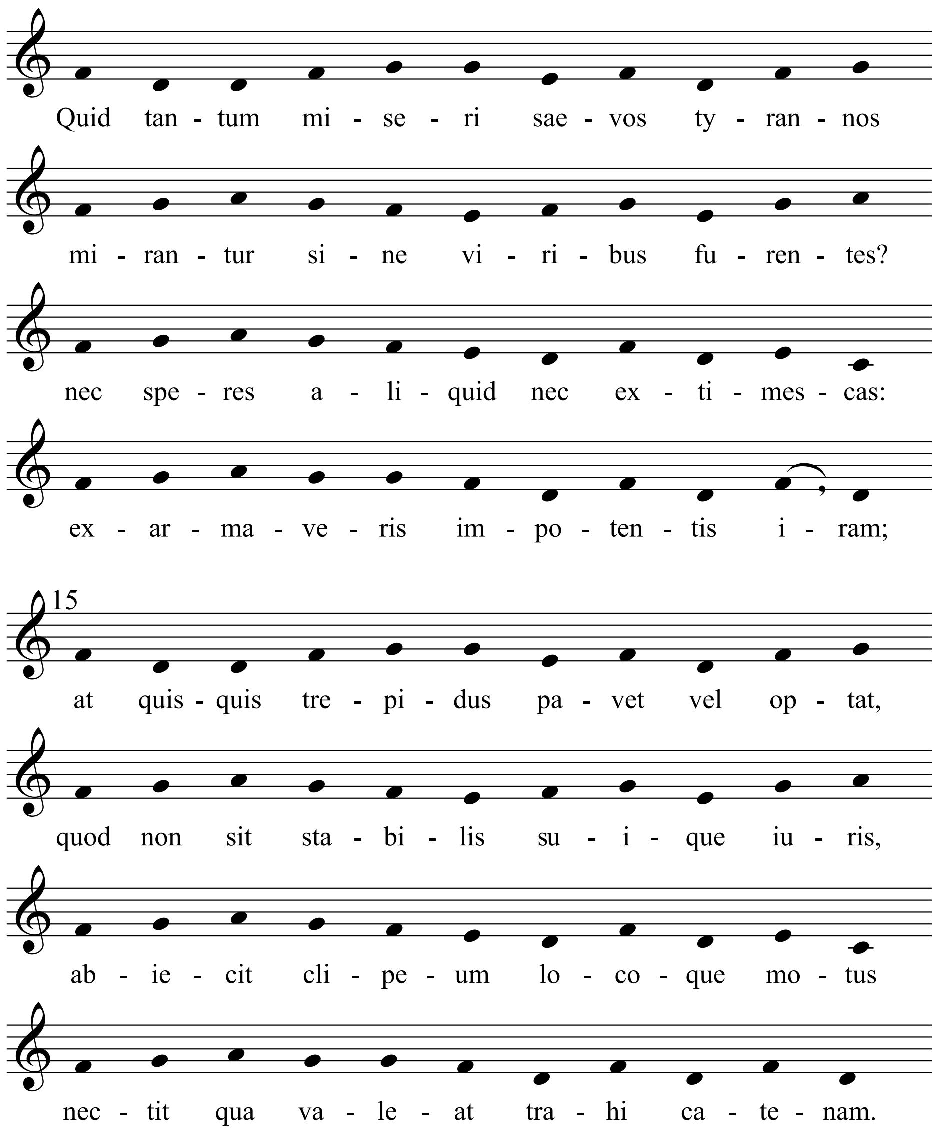
Reconstruction by Benjamin Bagby and Sam Barrett, May 2017

Quisquis composito (I:4)

Philosophia encourages Boethis to master his emotions to return to philosophical reflection



Whoever, serene
in an ordered life,
has brought
proud Fate to heel
and gazing on Fortune
can keep
an unbowed expression,
standing up to both,
will not be moved by the
rages and perils of the sea,
churning up surges
from the depths,
neither will he stagger
as often as Vesuvius
spews out fiery flames,
its forges burst,
nor will his path be diverted
by the lofty pillars
of singeing lightning,
injurious to man.



Why do so many
wretched people marvel
at savage tyrants,
raging without power?
Hope for nothing,
fear nothing:
you will disarm the
anger of the impotent;
for whoever fears
or desires timidly,
being neither stable
nor self-governed,
has thrown away his
shield and fled to
where he fastens the chain
that hauls him off.

Cambridge UL Gg.5.35, fol. *442r

Reconstructed by Sam Barrett,
Benjamin Bagby and Hanna Marti,
May 2017

O stelliferi conditor orbis (I:5)

Boethius praises God's harmonious ordering of the universe (lines 1-24), complains about Fortune's rule over human affairs (lines 25-41), and concludes with a supplication (lines 42-48)



Creator of the starry firmament, who, enthroned on your everlasting seat,

turn the heavens in rapid rotation and compel stars to follow your law,

so that now, shining with full brightness, reflecting all her brother’s light,

the moon hides the lesser stars,

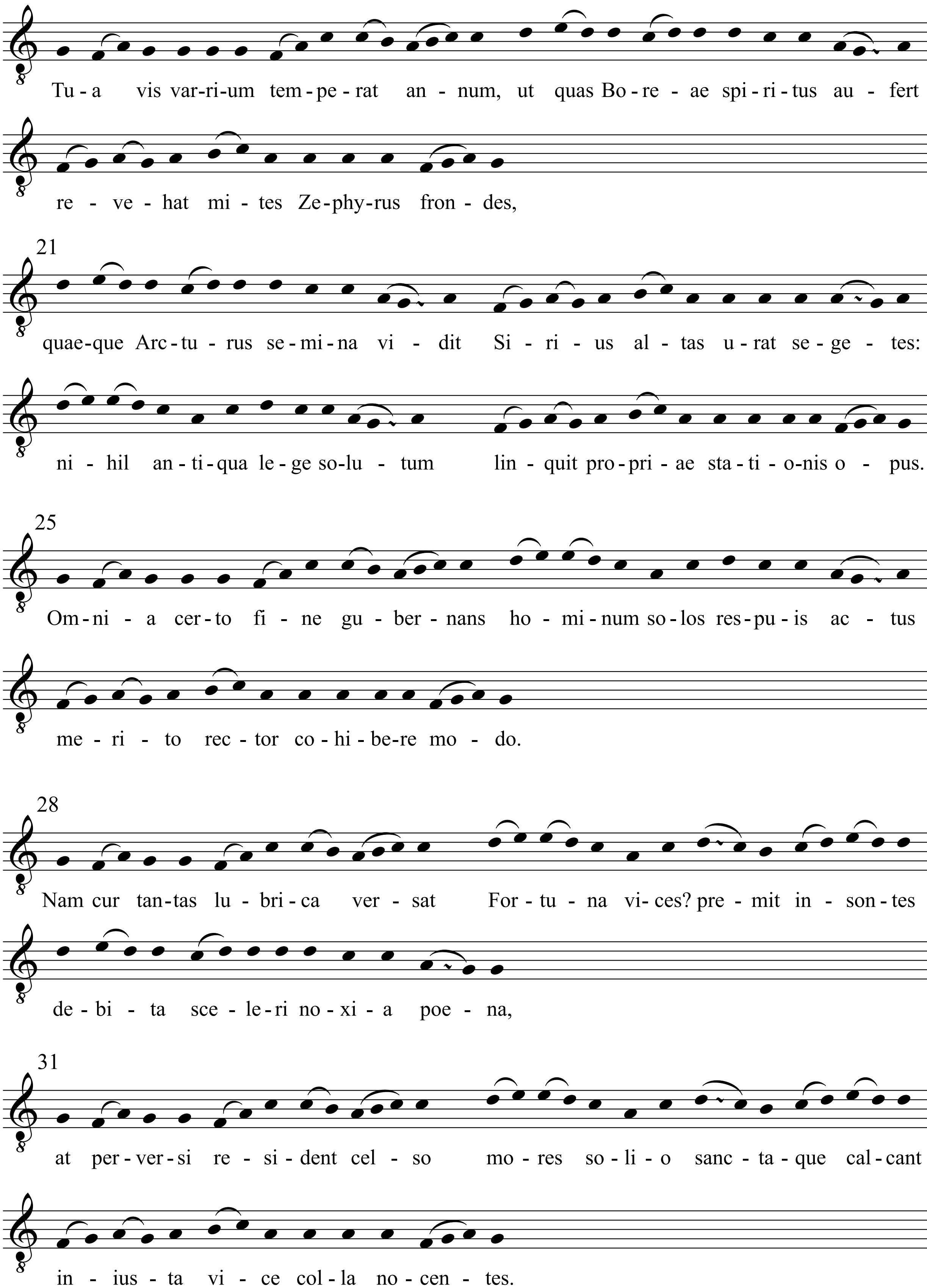
now pale, nearer to the sun with her brightness obscured, she loses her radiance,

and he who as the evening star at the first hour of the night made frosty dawn rise,

changes his usual course again, as the morning star dims at the rising of the sun!

You in the coldness of leaf-shedding winter compress daylight into a shorter time;

you, when fiery summer comes, apportion the swift hours of night.



Your power tempers
the varied year,
so that leaves swept
away by gusts of the
north wind
are borne back by the
gentle west wind,

and seeds seen
by Arcturus are
scorched by Sirius
as tall crops:
nothing bound
by your ancient law
escapes the duty
of its allotted station.

Governing all things
with sure purpose,
it is only men's deeds
that you, ruler,
refuse to
restrain justly.

For why does slimy
Fortune overturn
so many fates?
Harmful punishment
due to criminals is
meted out to the
innocent,

the ways of the
corrupt abide in high
places, and in an
unjust turn the
wicked trample
on the necks of
the saintly.



Brilliant virtue remains hidden in obscure darkness and the just man bears the crime of the wicked.

No perjury, no fraud composed with deceitful appearance harms them but when it pleases them,

whom innumerable people fear, these men take pleasure in bringing low the greatest kings.

Now look down on this wretched earth, whoever binds the bonds of state!

A vile part of so great a work should not harry men adrift on Fortune's sea.

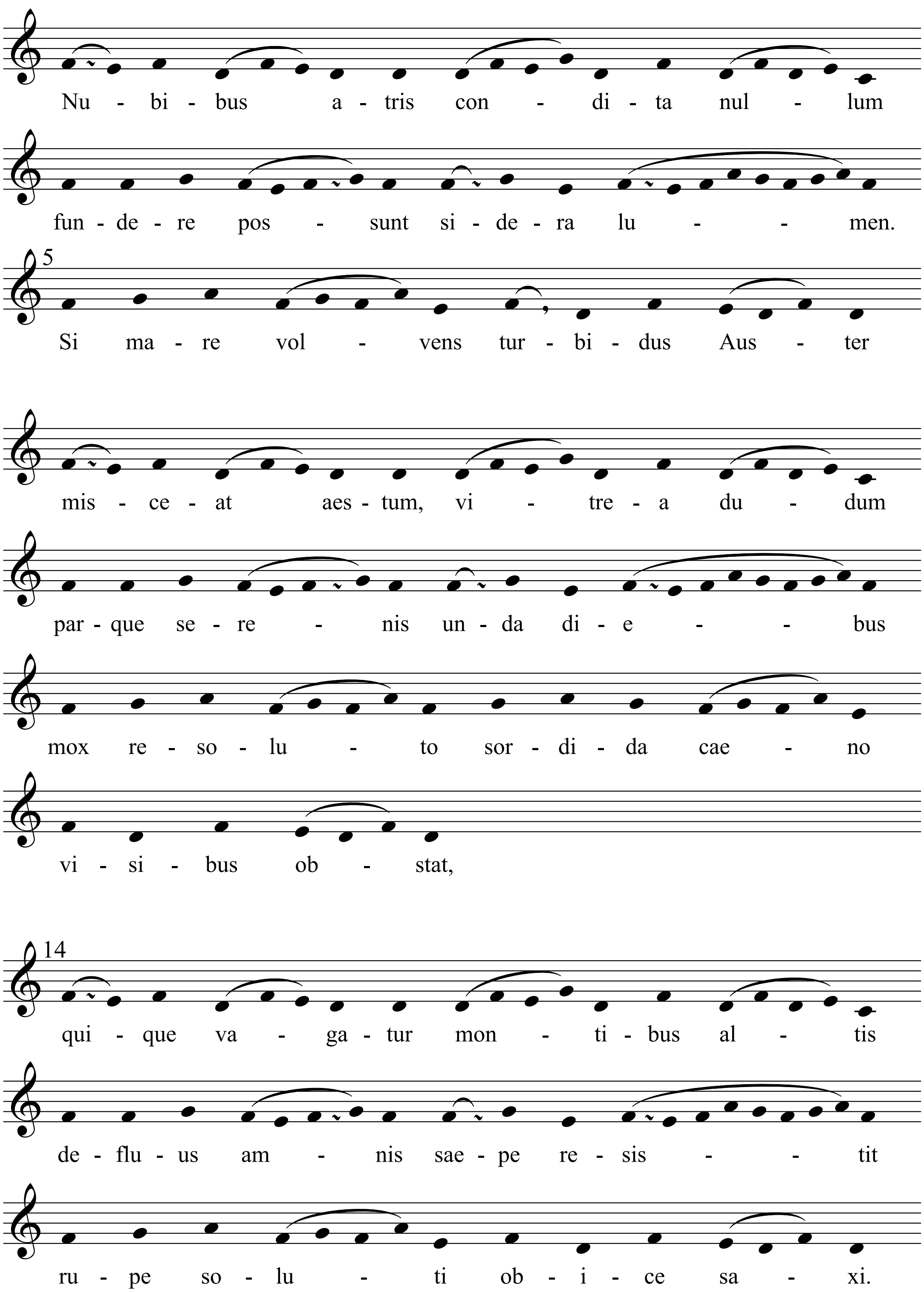
Ruler, check the rushing waves, And as you rule the boundless heavens, create stable lands with your law!

Cambridge UL Gg.5.35, fol. *442r

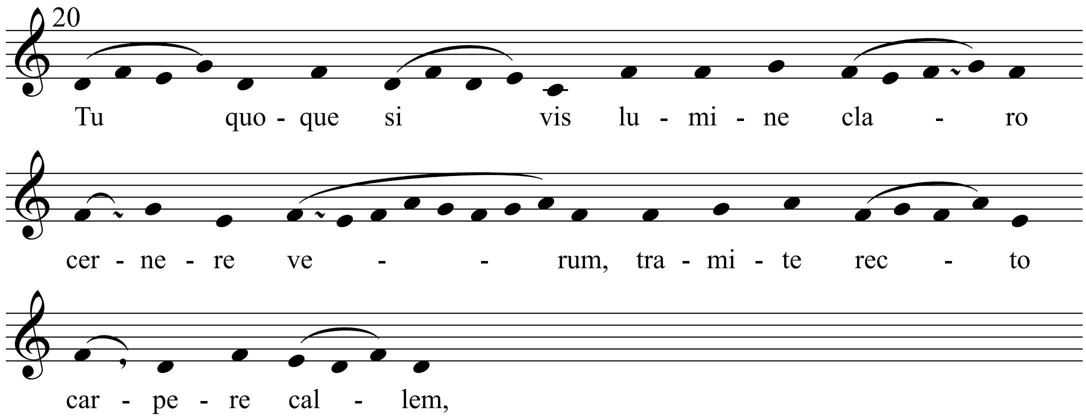
Reconstructed by Benjamin Bagby and Hanna Marti, revised with Sam Barrett, May 2017

Nubibus atris (I:7)

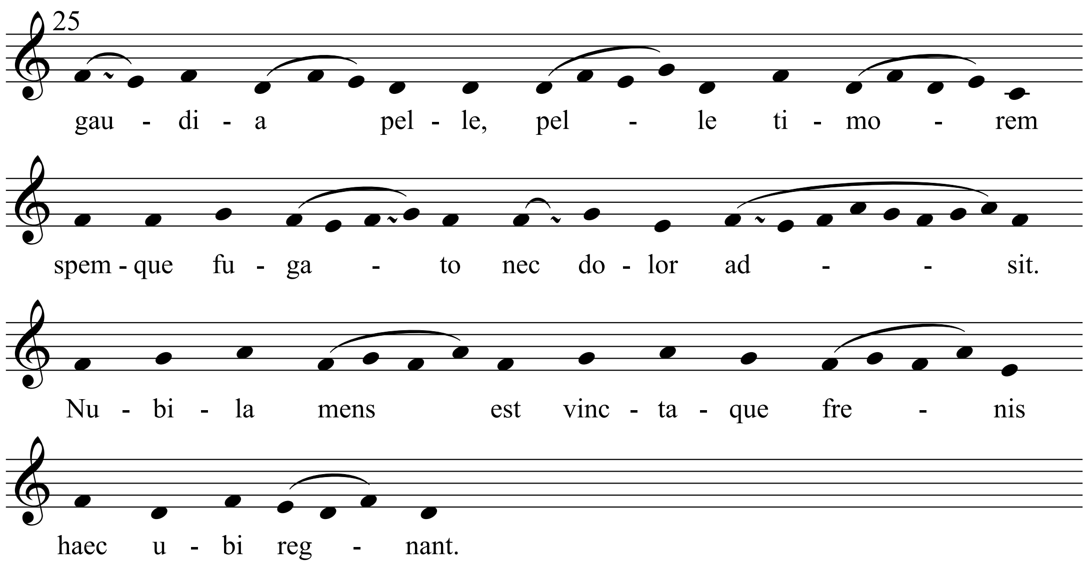
Philosophia turns to nature imagery to instruct Boethius to free his mind in order to perceive the truth



Covered by dark clouds
the stars can
pour forth
no light.
If the stormy south wind,
churning up the sea,
should disturb
the tide,
a wave, formerly
glassy and smooth
as in serene days,
become murky with
loosed mud
soon obscures sight;
and a stream that
meanders down
from the high mountains
is often dammed
by a rock loosened
from a barrier of stone.



You also, if you want
with clear insight
to discern the truth,
make your way
by a just path:



drive out joys,
drive out fear,
and banish hope
lest there be grief.
The mind is clouded
and held in chains
where these reign.

Cambridge UL Gg. 5. 35, fol. *442r

Reconstructed by Hanna Marti,
Benjamin Bagby and Sam Barrett
May 2017

TRANSLATIONS

I:1

Boethius

Carmina qui quondam studio florente peregi,
  flebilis heu maestos cogor inire modos.
Ecce mihi lacerae dictant scribenda Camenae
  et veris elegi fletibus ora rigant.
Has saltem nullus potuit pervincere terror
  ne nostrum comites prosequerentur iter.
Gloria felicis olim viridisque iuventae,
  solantur maesti nunc mea fata senis.
Venit enim properata malis inopina senectus
  et dolor aetatem iussit inesse suam.
Intempestivi funduntur vertice cani
  et tremit effeto corpore laxa cutis.
Mors hominum felix, quae se nec dulcibus annis
  inserit et maestis saepe vocata venit!
Eheu, quam surda miseros avertitur aure
  et flentes oculos claudere saeva negat!
Dum levibus male fida bonis fortuna faveret
  paene caput tristis merserat hora meum:
nunc quia fallacem mutavit nubila vultum
  protrahit ingratas impia vita moras.
Quid me felicem totiens iactastis, amici?
  Qui cecidit, stabili non erat ille gradu.

I, who once composed songs with abundant zeal,
  tearful, alas, am forced to begin sad strains.
 Look! Muses rent with grief dictate what I should write
  and elegiacs moisten my cheeks with real tears.
At least fear could not conquer them
  for they would follow my path as companions.
Once the glory of a charmed and lively youth,
  now they console my fate in sad old age.
For senility has come without warning, hastened by ills,
  and sorrow has brought on the years.
White hairs cover my head ahead of time
  and my skin shakes, loosed from a worn-out body.
Fortunate is the man whose death comes not in
  pleasant times but in sad ones when often called for!
Alas, how cruel death turns a deaf ear to the wretched
  and refuses to close weeping eyes!
While Fortune in bad faith favoured me with trivial goods,
  an hour of sadness would have nearly drowned me:
Now her clouded face has taken on a false appearance,
  my wretched life prolongs thankless days.
Why did you dismiss me so often as fortunate, friends?
  The step of one who falls was never stable.

I:2

Philosophia

Heu, quam praecipiti mersa profundo
mens hebet et propria luce relicta
tendit in externas ire tenebras,
terrenis quotiens flatibus aucta
crescit in immensum noxia cura!
Hic quondam caelo liber aperto
suetus in aetherios ire meatus
cernebat rosei lumina solis,
visebat gelidae sidera lunae
et quaecumque vagos stella recursus
exercet varios flexa per orbes
comprensam numeris victor habebat;
quin etiam causas unde sonora
flamina sollicitent aequora ponti,
quis volvat stabilem spiritus orbem
vel cur Hesperias sidus in undas
casurum rutilo surgat ab ortu,
quid veris placidas temperet horas,
ut terram roseis floribus ornet,
quis dedit ut pleno fertilis anno
autumnus gravidis influat uvis
rimari solitus atque latentis
naturae varias reddere causas:
nunc iacet effeto lumine mentis
et pressus gravibus colla catenis
declivemque gerens pondere vultum
cogitur, heu, stolidam cernere terram.

Alas, how the mind submerged in precipitous depths
is dulled and turning its back on the light
strives to head into outer darkness,
whenever anxiety grows immeasurably,
whipped up by mundane storms!
This man, once free under the open sky,
accustomed to charting courses in the heavens,
used to perceive the brightness of the rosy sun;
he beheld the constellations of the icy moon
and whatever winding course a star took,
turning back through its various orbits,
he masterfully comprehended in numbers;
he even investigated how thunderous
winds stir up the surface of the ocean,
what force turns the stable orb,
or why the evening star falls into western waves
and rises in ruddy dawn;
he used to divine what tempers the mild hours of spring
to adorn the earth with blooming flowers,
and who ordains that fertile autumn is laden
with pregnant grapes in the fulness of the year,
thus he rendered the various causes
of hidden nature.
Now he lies, the light of his mind extinguished,
his neck pressed down by heavy chains,
and wearing an expression downcast with care,
forced, alas, to behold the bare earth.

I:3

Boethius

Tunc me discussa liquerunt nocte tenebrae
luminibusque prior rediit vigor,
ut cum praecipiti glomerantur sidera Coro
nimbosisque polus stetit imbribus
sol latet ac nondum caelo venientibus astris
desuper in terram nox funditur;
hanc si Threicio Boreas emissus ab antro
verberet et clausam reseret diem,
emicat ac subito vibratus lumine Phoebus
mirantes oculos radiis ferit.

Then the gloom lifted from me as the night dissolved
and my eyes regained their previous strength,
as when the firmament is corralled by a precipitous
northwest wind and the pole engulfed by stormy rain clouds,
the sun is hidden and night spreads out over the earth
from above, the stars not yet apparent in the sky;
if the west wind sent from its Thracian cave
should lash out and unlock the sealed day,
the sun would shine forth and, suddenly glimmering with
brightness, transport marvelling eyes with its rays.

I:4

Philosophia

Quisquis composito serenus aevo
fatum sub pedibus egit superbum
fortunamque tuens utramque rectus
invictum potuit tenere vultum,
non illum rabies minaeque ponti
versum funditus exagitantis aestum
nec ruptis quotiens vagus caminis
torquet fumificos Vesaevus ignes
aut celsas soliti ferire turres
ardentis via fulminis movebit.
Quid tantum miseri saevos tyrannos
mirantur sine viribus furentes?
nec speres aliquid nec extimescas:
exarmaveris impotentis iram;
at quisquis trepidus pavet vel optat,
quod non sit stabilis suique iuris,
abiecit clipeum locoque motus
nectit qua valeat trahi catenam.

Whoever, serene in an ordered life,
has brought proud Fate to heel
and gazing on Fortune can keep
an unbowed expression, standing up to both,
will not be moved by the rages and perils of the sea,
churning up surges from the depths,
neither will he stagger as often as Vesuvius
spews out fiery flames, its forges burst,
nor will his path be diverted by the lofty pillars
of singeing lightning, injurious to man.
Why do so many wretched people marvel
at savage tyrants, raging without power?
Hope for nothing, fear nothing:
you will disarm the anger of the impotent;
for whoever fears or desires timidly,
being neither stable nor self-governed,
has thrown away his shield and fled to
where he fastens the chain that hauls him off.

I:5

Boethius

O stelliferi conditor orbis,
qui perpetuo nixus solio
rapido caelum turbine versas
legemque pati sidera cogis,
ut nunc pleno lucida cornu
totis fratris obvia flammis
condat stellas luna minores,
nunc obscuro pallida cornu
Phoebo propior lumina perdat
et qui primae tempore noctis
agit algentes Hesperos ortus
solitas iterum mutet habenas
Phoebi pallens Lucifer ortu!
Tu frondifluae frigore brumae
stringis lucem breviore mora;
tu cum fervida venerit aestas
agiles nocti dividis horas.
Tua vis varium temperat annum,
ut quas Boreae spiritus aufert
revehat mites Zephyrus frondes,
quaeque Arcturus semina vidit
Sirius altas urat segetes:
nihil antiqua lege solutum
linquit propriae stationis opus.
Omnia certo fine gubernans
hominum solos respuis actus
merito rector cohibere modo.
Nam cur tantas lubrica versat
Fortuna vices? premit insontes
debita sceleri noxia poena,
at perversi resident celso
mores solio sanctaque calcant
iniusta vice colla nocentes.
Latet obscuris condita virtus
clara tenebris iustusque tulit
crimen iniqui.
Nil periuria, nil nocet ipsis
fraus mendaci compta colore,
sed cum libuit viribus uti,
quos innumeri metuunt populi
summos gaudent subdere reges.
O iam miseras respice terras,
quisquis rerum foedera nectis!
operis tanti pars non vilis
homines quatimur fortunae salo.
Rapidos, rector, comprime fluctus
et quo caelum regis immensum
firma stabiles foedere terras!

Creator of the starry firmament,
who, enthroned on your everlasting seat,
turn the heavens in rapid rotation
and compel stars to follow your law,
so that now, shining with full brightness,
reflecting all her brother’s light,
the moon hides the lesser stars,
now pale, nearer to the sun with her brightness
obscured, she loses her radiance
and he who as the evening star
at the first hour of the night made frosty dawn rise,
changes his usual course again,
as the morning star dims at the rising of the sun!
You in the coldness of leaf-shedding winter
compress daylight into a shorter time;
you, when fiery summer comes,
apportion the swift hours of night.
Your power tempers the varied year,
so that leaves swept away by gusts of the north wind,
are borne back by the gentle west wind,
and seeds seen by Arcturus
are scorched by Sirius as tall crops:
nothing bound by your ancient law
escapes the duty of its allotted station.
Governing all things with sure purpose,
it is only men’s deeds that you, ruler,
refuse to restrain justly.
For why does slimy Fortune overturn
so many fates? Harmful punishment
due to criminals is meted out to the innocent,
the ways of the corrupt abide in high places,
and in an unjust turn the wicked trample
on the necks of the saintly.
Brilliant virtue remains hidden in obscure
darkness and the just man bears
the crime of the wicked.
No perjury, no fraud composed
with deceitful appearance harms them,
but when it pleases them, whom innumerable
people fear, these men take pleasure
in bringing low the greatest kings.
Now look down on this wretched earth,
whoever binds the bonds of state!
A vile part of so great a work should not
harry men adrift on Fortune’s sea.
Ruler, check the rushing waves,
And as you rule the boundless heavens,
create stable lands with your law!

I:7

Philosophia
Nubibus atris
condita nullum
fundere possunt
sidera lumen.
Si mare volvens
turbidus Auster
misceat aestum,
vitrea dudum
parque serenis
unda diebus
mox resoluto
sordida caeno
visibus obstat,
quique vagatur
montibus altis
defluus amnis
saepe resistit
rupe soluti
obice saxi.
Tu quoque si vis
lumine claro
cernere verum,
tramite recto
carpere callem,
gaudia pelle,
pelle timorem
spemque fugato
nec dolor adsit.
Nubila mens est
vinctaque frenis
haec ubi regnant.

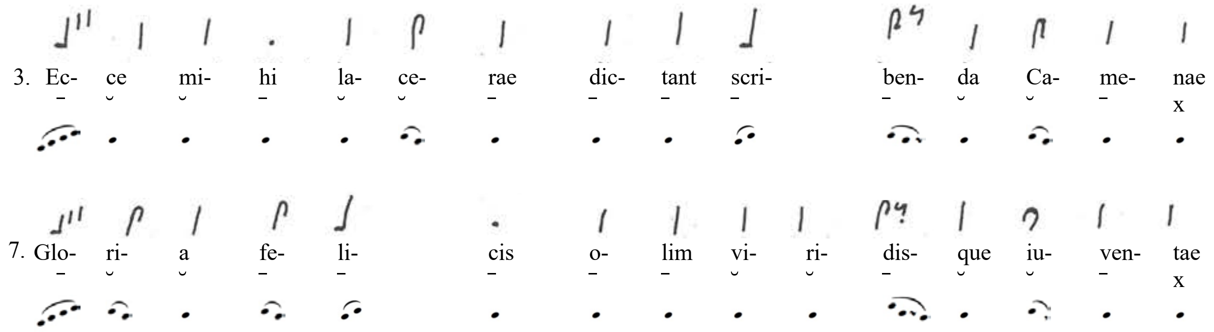
Covered by dark clouds
the stars can
pour forth
no light.
If the stormy south wind,
churning up the sea,
should disturb
the tide,
a wave,
formerly glassy and smooth
as in serene days,
become murky with loosed mud
soon obscures sight;
and a stream that
meanders down
from the high mountains
is often dammed
by a rock loosened from
a barrier of stone.
You also, if you want
with clear insight
to discern the truth,
make your way
by a just path:
drive out joys,
drive out fear,
and banish hope
lest there be grief.
The mind is clouded
and held in chains
where these reign.

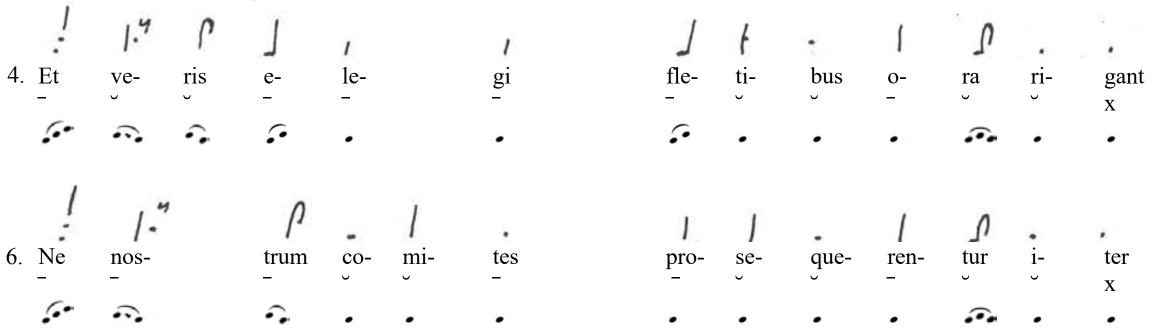
COMMENTARY

Carmina qui quondam (I:1)

The *De consolatione philosophiae* opens with Boethius lamenting the state into which he has fallen. In eleven elegiac couplets (i.e. dactylic hexameters followed by pentameters), he compares his sorrowful songs of advanced age to the songs of his contented youth, blaming the wiles of Fortune for his downfall.

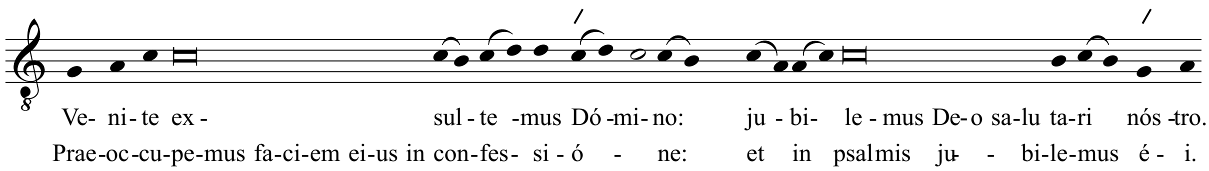
Notation was added in the Cambridge leaf to the opening 8 lines of the 22-line poem, which was written out in full. The neumes alone indicate a distinctive melodic profile. The following remarks refer to the example below, in which notations are aligned for hexameter lines 3 and 7, and pentameter lines 4 and 6; scansion signs are placed beneath each syllable to indicate metrical quantity, and stemless noteheads clarify the basic information transmitted by each neume about discrete pitches. Each line opens with an initial rise in the melody represented by signs placed in a rising trajectory over the first syllable. This opening rise is followed by a flexible pattern of ascents and descents indicated by signs in the shape of crooks (two descending tones or a *clivis*) and ticks (two ascending tones or a *pes*). This sequence of varied length ends in a single tone at the mid-point of the verse line, which corresponds to a fixed break or caesura in the verse after two and a half dactylic feet, i.e. - ⏖ | - ⏖ | -. Towards the end of the line, the neumes indicate cadential patterns that begin at the point that the text enters into a fixed metrical and accentual pattern, namely 5 syllables from the end of the line in the odd-numbered dactylic lines and 7 from the end in the even-numbered pentameter lines.





This way of singing a text corresponds to principles of recitation used in psalm singing, for which formulae known as Tones were used to chant verses of varying length. By way of illustration, the words of the first two verses of Psalm 94 are set below to a standard formula known as Tone 2 taken from an early tenth-century treatise on psalmody known as the *Commemoratio brevis*.[1] Each psalm verse is split into two parts around a central caesura. After a rising intonation there is recitation on a single tone, followed by a pattern of descending and ascending two-tone figures five or six syllables before the caesura depending on whether the final accent is penultimate or antepenultimate. Following the caesura, a new falling and then rising two-note intonation leads to further recitation on a single tone before a cadence fixed four syllables from the end that returns from the recitation tone to the final.

[1] *Commemoratio brevis de tonis et psalmis modulandis* (A Brief Review of the Modes and Psalm Singing), no. 22, ed. and trans., Terence Bailey, *Commemoratio brevis de tonis et psalmis modulandis: Introduction, Critical Edition, Translation*, Ottawa: The University of Ottawa Press, 1979, pp. 35 and 109.



It is fitting that a method of reciting psalms was applied to *Carmina qui quondam* as the texts of psalms and elegiac couplets share a number of traits. Both feature a variable number of syllables before and after the poetic caesura in the middle of the line. In *Carmina qui quondam* there are between 12 and 17 syllables in each line, divided roughly equally around a fixed caesura after two and a half dactylic feet. In Psalm 94, there are 28 syllables per line on average, with an average of 16 syllables before and 12 after the caesura at the mid-point.

Individual neumatic signs used by the notator of the Cambridge leaf provide hints about specific pitches. The sign found at *fletibus* in line 4 and *mes**ti*** in line 8 is unusual in featuring a diagonal stoke (known as a *virga*) with a small dash in the middle on the right-hand side. The meaning of this sign is clear from its appearance in another mid-11th-century Anglo-Saxon manuscript from Canterbury, where it corresponds with the pitch ‘f’ or “fa” (i.e. the upper pitch at the semitone step, “mi-fa”).[2] Other hints about relative pitch are transmitted by a number of different means. The diagonal single-note signs in line 1 have ascenders of different length; it is clear from uses of this sign in contemporaneous Anglo-Saxon chant notations that the longer the ascender, the higher the pitch.[3] The disposition of signs in relation to each other across the page also provides a certain amount of indication about relative pitch: signs placed relatively high in the available space typically indicate higher pitches. A conventional distinction is also drawn between single notes represented by diagonal strokes (*virgae*), which indicate a relatively high note in relation to those surrounding and are frequently also used to record monotone recitation, and single notes represented by dots, which indicate relatively low tones.

Of the eight psalm tones that correspond to the eight modes used to categorize Gregorian chant, the psalm tone that fits most closely to the melodic profile sketched by the neumes added to *Carmina qui quondam* is Tone 2. Even once a melodic principle has been identified for *Carmina qui quondam*, the working out remains open to interpretation. The realization of psalm tones differed depending on the level of solemnity of the occasion; a psalm sung as part of the daily Office would be chanted in simpler fashion than one sung in the Mass; in this case, the level of complexity is closest to

[2] The same sign was written at the syllable ***geni**tore* in *O crucifer bone* as copied on fol. 3^{v} of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. F. 3. 6. The pitch *f* for this syllable is confirmed by the version of the melody copied on a four-line staff in a twelfth-century cantatorium from Beauvais, i.e. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, nouvelles acquisitions lat. 1064, fol. 20^{v}.
[3] See Susan Rankin, *The Winchester Troper: Facsimile Edition and Introduction*, London: Stainer and Bell, 2007, p. 28.

the elaborate form used for psalms chanted during the Mass. A number of decisions also remain in extending the recitational principle used for single verses of psalms across a poetic couplet. Here an *ouvert/clos* or open/closed relation as found in many medieval song traditions has been used. The first line has an open cadence that returns to the recitation tone, a decision prompted by the use of two *virgae* indicating relatively high tones on the final two syllables in the line. A closed cadence on the final is reserved for the end of the couplet.

The melody proposed here serves as one possible realization within a relatively narrow set of options afforded by a Tone 2 recitation and the range of clarificatory pitch information provided by the neumes. The principles recorded in the notation for lines 1-8 have been extended across the whole text of the *metrum*, an extension implied by the copying of the complete poem at the opening of the Cambridge Songs leaf.

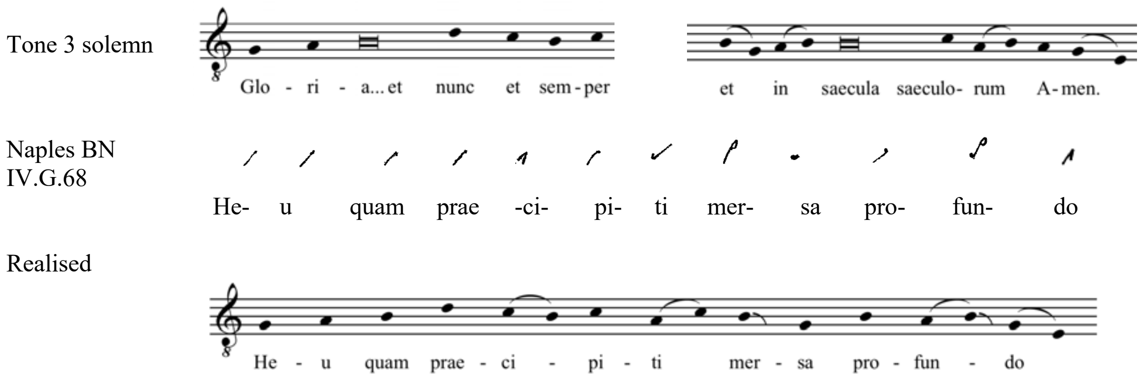
A version of the explanation above was first published in Sam Barrett, 'Creative Practice and the Limits of Knowledge in Reconstructing Lost Songs from Boethius's "On the Consolation of Philosophy"', *Journal of Musicology* 36.3 (2019), pp. 272-74. On the wider notated tradition for this *metrum*, see further, Sam Barrett, *The Melodic Tradition of Boethius'* De consolatione philosophiae *in the Middle Ages*, 2 vols. Kassel and Basel: Bärenreiter, 2013, vol. I, pp. 110-15 and vol. II, pp. 191-3.

Heu quam praecipiti (I:2)

The second song in the *De consolatione philosophiae* is sung by Philosophia, who laments Boethius' fallen state and sternly exhorts him to begin the process of returning to his right mind. Each line of the poetic text is divided into two parts divided by a fixed caesura after the seventh syllable. The first part consists of what may be described as two and a half dactylic feet, a pattern familiar from the opening of a dactylic hexameter. The second part features an Adonic, whose metrical pattern of a dactyl followed by a long and then either a short or long syllable is routinely found as the final two feet of a dactylic hexameter line.

Heu quam praecipiti   mersa profundo
– – – ˘ ˘ –   – ˘ ˘ – –

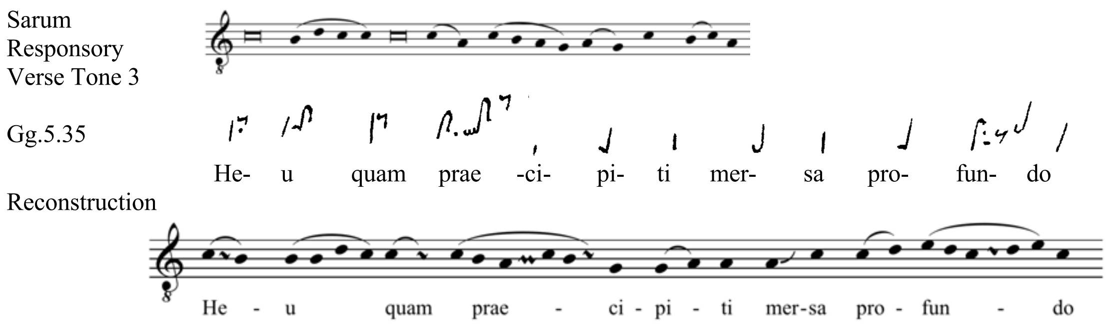
The wider notated tradition provides a way into understanding the relatively elaborate melody notated in the Cambridge leaf. The profile of a melody recorded for *Heu quam praecipiti* in the late ninth or early tenth century at the Abbey of Sankt Gallen (Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale IV. 68) accords with a solemn Tone 3 as recorded in the early tenth-century treatise *Commemoratio brevis*.[4]



The melodic profile of the opening of the first notated line in the mid eleventh-century Cambridge leaf corresponds with a more elaborate Tone 3 as used for Responsory Verses. In the first half of the line, there is a particularly close correspondence between the profile of the notated melody for *Heu quam praecipiti* in the Cambridge leaf and the Responsory Verse Tone 3 as found in the Sarum

[4] *Commemoratio brevis*, ed. and trans. Bailey, p. 37.

repertory, i.e. the version of plainchant associated with Salisbury Cathedral that spread rapidly across England during the Middle Ages.[5]



Formulaic phrases used in the Responds of mode 3 Responsories in the Sarum repertory provide further guidance for realizing the remainder of the melody. Decisions as to which responsorial phrases to follow as models were guided not only by proximity in profile, but also by customary sequences of phrases in the repertory.[6] Further information provided by the neumatic notation also acted as a guide, especially the pattern of repetition in the neumatic notation; for example, the pattern of neumes from line 4 *quoti**ens*** to the end echoes line 1 *prae**cipiti*** into line 2. Another important criterion in guiding realization was melodic grammar. Aside from following characteristic procedures, a series of decisions was made about matching the pitches of cadences to punctuation according to degrees of melodic closure and textual punctuation.

The reconstructed melody proposed here was prepared in conjunction with Benjamin Bagby and Hanna Marti, who collaborated in a series of creative practical experiments. The melody was expanded beyond the notation provided for the opening ten lines by variously repeating and excising lines within the first strophic unit of five lines, paying particular attention to match degrees of closure and cadence in text and melody wherever possible; in particular, the implications of punctuation and syntax were followed to begin new strophes in lines 15, 20 and 24. An expanded version of the explanation above was first published in Barrett, 'Creative Practice', pp. 274-79.

[5] Walter H. Frere, *Antiphonale Sarisburiense: A Reproduction in Facsimile of a Manuscript of the Thirteenth Century, with a Dissertation and Analytical Index*, 3 vols. London: Plainsong and Mediæval Music Society Publication, 1901–15, vol. 1, pp. 29–32.
[6] For a full account of the phrases taken from Tone 3 Sarum Responsories, see Barrett, 'Creative Practice', pp. 276-9.

Tunc me discussa (I:3)

Neumes for the third *metrum* of Book I survive only in the Cambridge Songs leaf. The scarcity of notation is not surprising as this *metrum* is the only one in *De consolatione philosophiae* that is not presented as a song. Instead the story as narrated by the fictional Boethius continues from the preceding prose section into the *metrum*, where a moment of inner transformation is described as a decisive moment in beginning his process of recovery.

The lyric metre is composed of dactylic elements: odd lines consist of hexameters and even lines are written in tetrameters. As with the setting of the elegiacs of *Carmina qui quondam*, the melodic profile recorded in the neumes implies behaviours associated with a psalm tone. The melody opens with a decorated intonation extending up to the fixed caesura in the opening line (*Tunc me discussa*). There follows a decorated pattern of recitation that extends into the second line (*liquerunt nocte tenebrae/ Luminibus-*), before a more elaborate figure placed over the syllables up to the caesura (*-que prior*). A melodic formula with some similarities to that found over syllables 3-5 of the first line follows after the caesura, which is now extended into a final cadence over the closing two syllables of the second line (*rediit vigor*).

The melodic profile of the opening intonation accords with a solemn Tone 7. The version of Tone 7 recorded for the Magnificat and Benedictus canticles in the Worcester Antiphoner (Worcester, Chapter Library, F. 160, hereafter WOR 160) is given by way of comparison. The way that the melody appears to come to rest on the fourth degree of the scale at the caesura is consistent with the handling of tone 7 in Introits, where *c'* is commonly established as a secondary centre in tandem with the lower *a*. An even clearer model in terms of overall melodic profile and procedure is provided by the Hymn of the Three Boys (the Canticle of Azariah) as reproduced below from the twelfth-century Bellelay Gradual (Porrentruy, Bibliothèque cantonale jurassienne 18, hereafter POR 18). This canticle may only loosely be considered a *hymnus* in so far as it consists of bi-partite verses with a repeating melodic outline for each verse. It is treated as a canticle with its own flexibly adapted tone; the overall result is a series of similarly elaborated psalmodic verses, a practical solution for lines of unequal syllable count. The cadential elaboration is notable for the descent to the subfinal before the cadence to create a so-called Gallican cadence.



a. WOR 160, p. 442

b. POR 18, p. 372

A melody for the whole of *Tunc me discussa* is proposed here on the basis of the reconstruction of the neumed opening couplet in the Cambridge Songs leaf given above. In this case, extension of the opening two-line psalmic model across the complete ten-line *metrum* was relatively unproblematic since the poem divides neatly into units of two lines. The proposed reconstruction was prepared in conjunction with Benjamin Bagby, who also collaborated in a series of creative practical experiments leading to the principles of reconstruction outlined above.

Quisquis composito (I:4)

The fourth *metrum* of the first book is sung by Philosophia, who encourages Boethius to master his emotions in order to return to philosophical reflection. Its eighteen lines are composed of hendecasyllables, which consist of the equivalent of the first half of a dactylic hexameter line followed by two iambs and a last syllable of variable length. Read as prose, the lines take the form of six syllables followed by five with a regular penultimate accent. This provides the same framework of syllables and cadential stresses as found in accentual Asclepiads, such as the Common hymn for one Martyr, *Martyr egregie*:

Quísquis compósito | serénus aévo	6pp + 5p
– – – ˘ ˘ – ˘ – ˘ – –	
Mártyr egrégie, | Déo dilécte	6pp + 5p

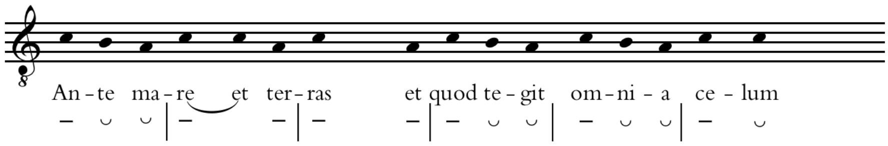
The notation added to the Cambridge leaf is remarkable for its syllabic setting and use of two means of indicating pitch height. The first is through diagonal strokes or *virgae* aligned horizontally at their base but whose highest point varies according to relative pitch. It is evident from this feature alone that the four-line setting includes patterns of melodic return organized around the half line, which may be broadly summarized as follows: *ab*, *cb'*, *c'd*, *c''d'*. The second means of indicating pitch is the use of a *virga* sign that resembles an "r" whose final stroke is extended at a right diagonal, as found at 2.7 ***e**git* and 3.6 *potu**it***. This sign is found in other eleventh-century English manuscripts, such as for the monophonic chants in the Winchester Troper, to indicate the upper side of the "mi-fa" semitone step or more simply "fa".[7] There are two remarkable features of its use here: first, it is employed within repeated melodic segments; secondly, the second sign at 3.6 appears to have been initially drawn as a regular *virga* to which a right diagonal stroke was then added. Both features point towards a clarifying function for the sign, possibly indicating differences from what might have been expected at these points.

The features noted so far suggest a setting of *Quisquis composito* in a hymnic style, but there are no clear parallels in terms of contour with surviving melodies for hendecasyllable hymns. In the absence of a specific model for reconstruction, a technique for reciting hexameters has been used as an informing practice. As may be observed below in both the early twelfth-century Beauvais Circumcision Office and in a slightly more elaborate form in the Later Cambridge Songs (copied in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century), dactylic verses could be recited using a minor-third

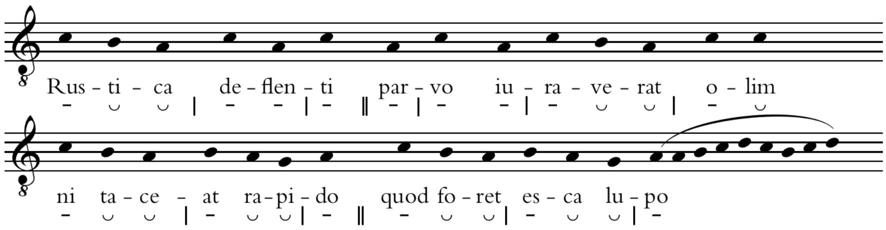
[7] See Rankin, *The Winchester Troper*, pp. 29-30.

recitation formula.[8] In both cases, a minor third is outlined within the dactylic foot, with the higher note on the dactylic ictus, and either successively lower notes on two following shorter syllables or a single lower note on the following long.

Opening trope element to Matins Verse *In principio erat verbum*, Circumcision Office, Beauvais (ed. Arlt)

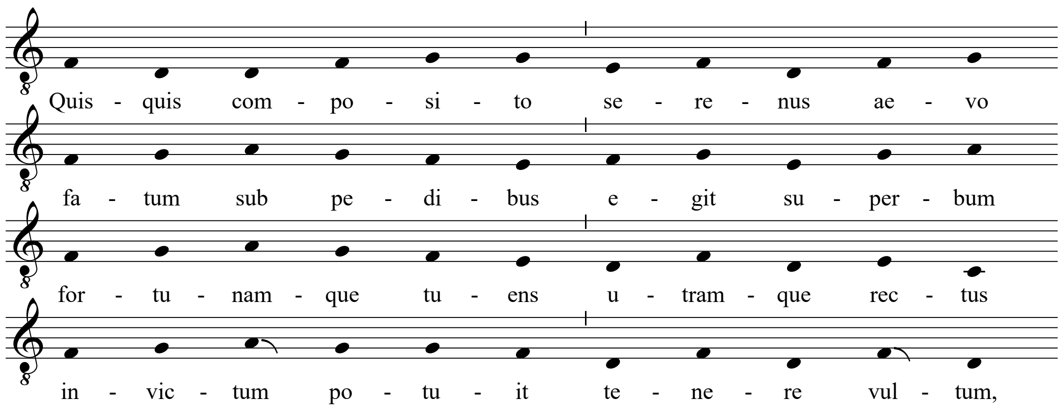


Section of a two-part troped *Benedicamus Domino*, Later Cambridge Songs (ed. Stevens)



This recitation technique appears relevant in this case since there is a near systematic association between metrical longs and higher pitches in the melodic contour in the neumes recorded on the Cambridge Songs leaf for *Quisquis composito*. With this recitation principle in mind, the tone *f* is used in the proposed reconstruction below on all accented syllables in the first line, and a low *d* is used for the signs indicated by a relatively low horizontal stroke. Beginning line 2 on *f* and following the indicated contour by step serves to align "fa" with the extended "r" *virga* after the caesura. Opening after the caesura in line 2 in this way puts the melody one step higher within the modal scale than in the previous line; indeed, drawing attention to this may have been the purpose of the special sign. Repeating the first half of line 2 in the third line leads the second half to return to a minor third axis, falling to an open cadence on the *subfinalis* (the note below the final) at the end of the line. The fourth line opens with another repeated profile, albeit adapted to accord with the indication of the "fa" step by the extended *virga* at the tone before the caesura, thereby defeating the expected cadence on mi at this point as in the previous two lines. The final half line returns to the minor third axis with short syllables sung on the low *d* and long syllables on *f*.

[8] Examples reproduced from Wulf Arlt, *Ein Festoffizium des Mittelalters aus Beauvais*, 2 vols. Cologne: Volk, 1970, vol. 1, p. 46; and John Stevens, *The Later Cambridge Songs*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 144.



The reconstructed melody given above was prepared in conjunction with Benjamin Bagby and Hanna Marti, who collaborated in a series of creative practical experiments. Extension of the four-line melody across the eighteen-line *metrum* proceeded by expanding the second strophe through internal melodic repetition to six lines. A version of the explanation above was first published in Sam Barrett, 'Creative Practice', pp. 279-81. For a second surviving notation from Anglo-Saxon England for this *metrum*, see Barrett, *The Melodic Tradition*, vol. II, p. 197.

O stelliferi conditor orbis (I:5)

Boethius recounts in the prose passage preceding this *metrum* how as a free man he stood up for justice and the Senate. The fifth *metrum* opens with 24 lines praising God's harmonious ordering of the universe before turning to a complaint against Fortune's rule over human affairs. The whole ends with a supplication of 7 lines, imploring God to establish the same law on earth by which He rules the heavens. The verse lines are commonly 10 syllables in length but range from 9-11 syllables. They are composed of anapaestic dimeters in which each pair of short syllables can be replaced by a long and vice versa:

⏑⏑ - ⏑⏑ - || ⏑⏑ - ⏑⏑ -

Clues to the mode may be found at the opening, at the end and at medial cadences, where features common to modes 7 and 8 can all be found; notably, the decoration of what is most likely to be the final at the opening, and what appears to be a distinctive *subfinalis-finalis-superfinalis* (note below the final, final, and note above the final) rising figure on the penultimate syllable (as found, for example, in the Communion antiphon *Domine memorabor*). A search among contemporaneous hymn melodies in lyric metres with a G final reveals one whose overall melodic design shares similarities with the melodic profile recorded for the Boethian *metrum* in the Cambridge leaf. *Almi prophetae* is composed in Alcaic metre and organized into four-line strophes, resulting in eleven-syllable lines divided into 5 syllables before and 6 syllables following a fixed caesura. The melody for *Almi prophetae* not only observes the Alcaic metre with higher notes regularly placed on long syllables (nos. 2 and 4 in the line), but also has an overall profile that matches with some proximity that recorded for *O stelliferi* in the Cambridge leaf. From the opening of the Cambridge notation for *O stelliferi conditor orbis* as far as the caesura in the second line, rising melodic movements are found only on long syllables (1.2, 1.6, 1.9 and 2.1), while relatively high pitches are found on all long syllables in the first half of the second line (2.1, 2.2 and 2.5); the second half of the third line similarly appears to respect metrical lengths with higher pitches placed on the first syllables of ***tur**bine **ver**sas*. The result of taking all melodic versions of *Almi prophetae* into account as a basis for reconstructing *O stelliferi conditor orbis* is as follows:

Versions of *Almi prophetae*:

a. Einsiedeln hymnal (s. xi) – ST 549_1
b. Verona hymnal (s. xii) – ST 549_2
c. Gaeta hymnal (s. xii) – ST 549_3

(ST=Bruno Stäblein (ed.), *Hymnen: Die mittelalterlichen Hymnenmelodien des Abendlandes*, Monumenta Monodica Medii Aevi 1, Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1956)


a.
b.
c.
Al - mi pro - phe - tae pro - ge - ni - es pi - a
Boethius 1.
O stel - li - fe - ri con - di - tor or - bis
a.
b.
c.
cla - rus pa - ren - te no - bi - li - or pa - tre
2.
qui per- pe - tu - o ni - xus so - li - o
a.
b.
c.
quem ma - tris al - vus clau - de - re ne - sci - a
3.
ra - pi - do cae - lum tur - bi - ne ver - sas
a.
b.
c.
or - tus e - ri - lis pro - di - dit in - di- cem
4.
le - gem - que pa - ti si - de - ra co - gis

The version of the reconstructed melody given here was prepared in conjunction with Benjamin Bagby, who also collaborated in a series of creative practical experiments leading to the principles of reconstruction outlined above. Extending the melody over the remaining lines of the poem represented a considerable task. The main factor taken into consideration was the division of the text into three discrete sections, namely the opening hymn of praise (lines 1-24), the following complaint (lines 25-41), and the closing supplication (lines 42-48). Within these main divisions, an attempt was made to match melodic closure with main points of textual articulation through flexible patterns of melodic repetition within the indicated opening four-line melodic unit of return. In so doing, particular advantage was taken of the flexibility in the melodic tradition of *Almi prophetae* between a closed *g* and open *a* cadence at the end of the third line of the strophe.

For the wider notated tradition of *O stelliferi conditor orbis*, see Barrett, *The Melodic Tradition*, vol. I, pp. 174-8, and vol. II, pp. 201-2.

Nubibus atris (I:7)

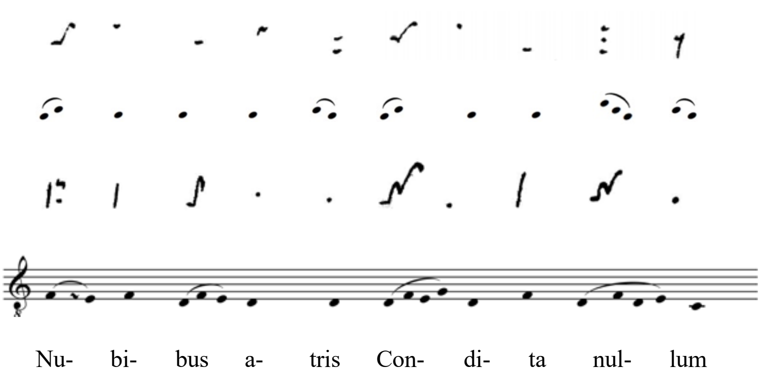
Philosophia closes the first book with poetic lines that turn to nature imagery to continue the theme explored in the previous prose passage, namely the need to remove the darkness of false ideas to restore the prisoner to the true light. Just as stars are clouded over and water is muddied in a storm, so Boethius is instructed to cast out emotions to free his mind in order to perceive the truth. The *metrum* is composed of Adonics, i.e. ¯ ˘ ˘ ¯ x.

Two substantially different melodies for this *metrum* were recorded in the Cambridge leaf, one over the main text and one that is now truncated in the margin. The interlinear notation corresponds in its observable principles with the five other surviving notations for this song, which consistently mark the fixed long syllables on the first and fourth syllables via a combination of raised and multiple pitches. As a guide to this wider tradition, only the notation with the clearest implications for pitch height is transcribed below (i.e from Paris BNdF lat. 7183) with clarification of the basic pitch content of the neumes added in stemless noteheads immediately below. The regularity of association between the fixed long syllables and higher picthes in the northern French notation suggests an informing recitational model, perhaps again the minor third principle as outlined in discussion of *Quisquis composito* (I:4). A similar principle appears to be at work in the interlinear notation in the Cambridge leaf since not only higher pitches but also melodic figures of more than one pitch are routinely placed on the fixed long syllables in the line, i.e. at the first and fourth syllables. The simplest interpretation of the surviving set of notations is that the interlinear melody in the Cambridge leaf represents an elaborated version of the minor-third recitation principle that informs the rest of the notated tradition. Proceeding from this basis, a melodic reconstruction may be attempted.

The version of the reconstructed melody given here was prepared in conjunction with Benjamin Bagby and Hanna Marti, informed by experimentation with the principles outlined above. Extension of the opening six-line melody across the thirty-one line *metrum* was guided by repetition and excision of melodic lines within the opening unit in order to begin new strophes at significant points of textual articulation, namely lines 14, 20 and 25. For the wider notated tradition of *Nubibus atris*, see Barrett, *The Melodic Tradition*, vol. II, pp. 204-9.

a.

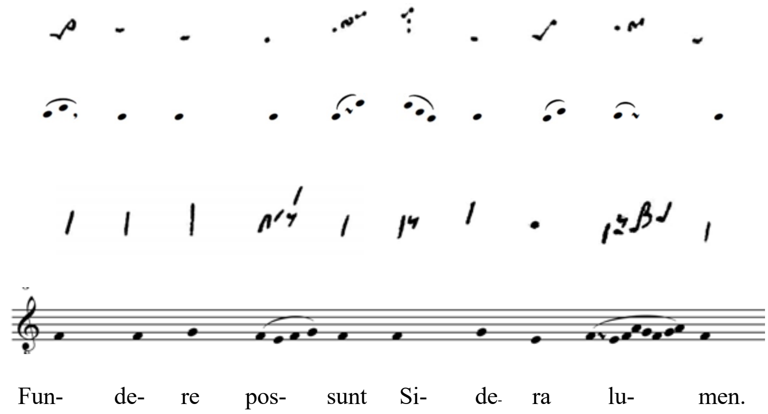
b.



1

a.

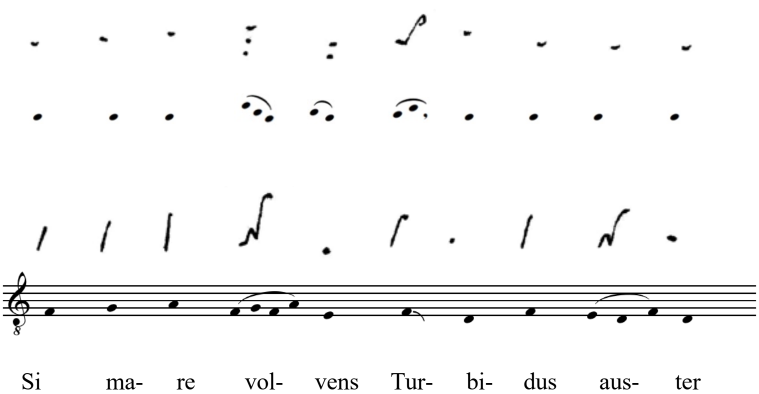
b.



3

a.

b.



5

a. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France latin 7183 (northern France, early 11th c.)

b. 'Cambridge Songs' leaf, Cambridge, University Library Gg. 5. 35
(St Augustine's Canterbury, mid 11th c.)